



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

BY AND BY



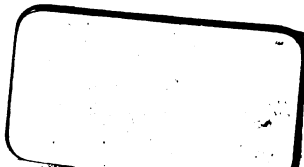
BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE PILGRIM AND THE SHRINE"



600075746Z



BODLEIAN LIBRARY
OXFORD



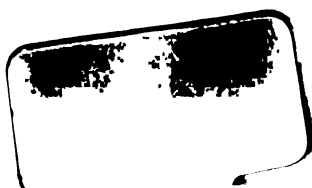


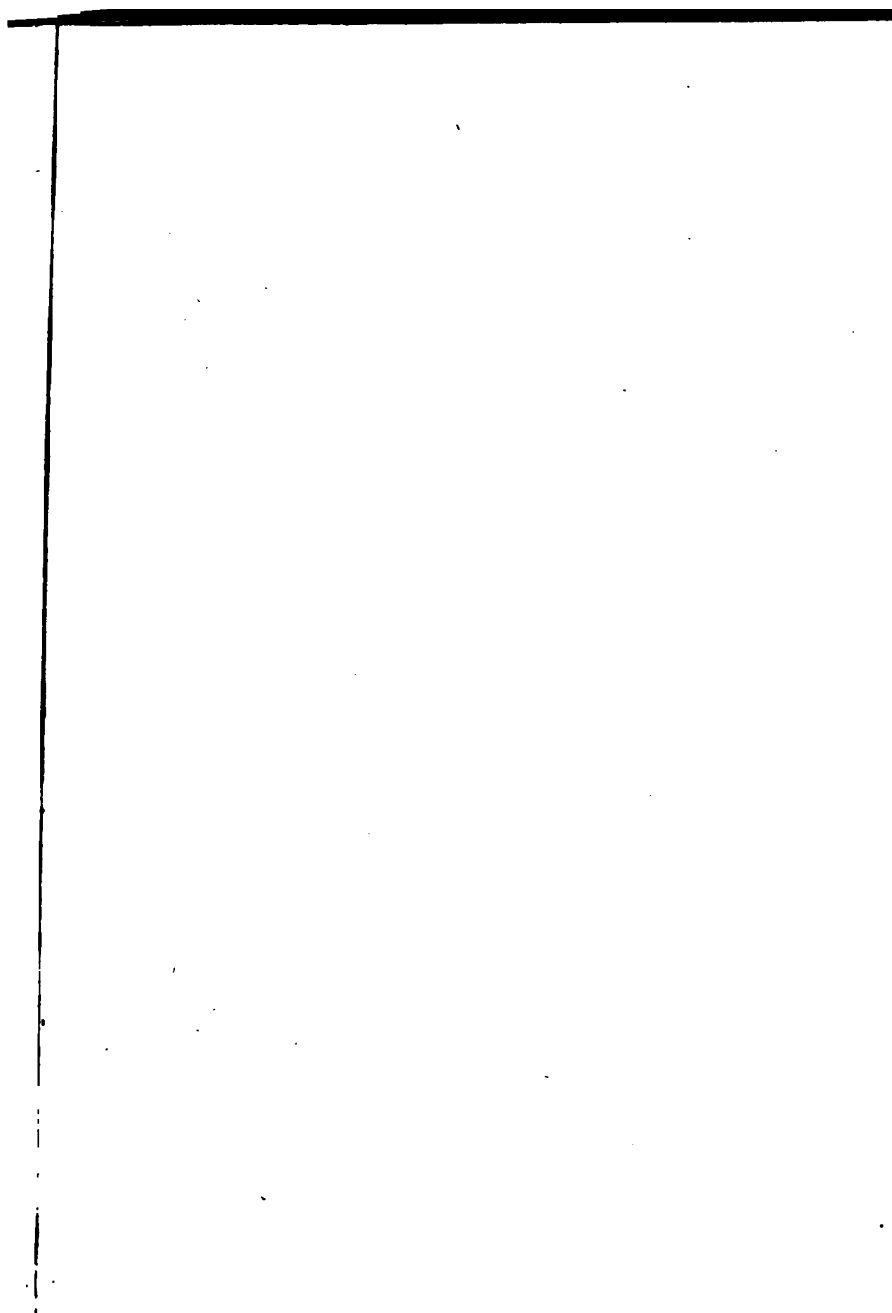
600075748Z



BODLEIAN LIBRARY

OXFORD





BY AND BY.

An Historical Romance of the Future.

BY

EDWARD MAITLAND,

AUTHOR OF

"THE PILGRIM AND THE SHRINE," "HIGHER LAW," ETC.

"In those days shall——"

Ancient Prophecy.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON.

1873.

[All Rights Reserved.]

249. 9. 300.



BY AND BY.

BOOK II. (*Continued.*)

CHAPTER V.

N the anticipation of his coming birthday, Criss had matter enough for thought, while pursuing his journey homeward, for he knew that he was then to be put in possession of his history and parentage so far as they were known, and be called upon to determine his career. But his mind refused to dwell upon aught save the face which he recognised as at once the face of the bride-angel and of the fair child he had rescued from the wreck, and left crying passionately at his departure. No matter whether he flew high or low; whether he swooped toward earth, so near as to catch

the voices of his fellowmen; or soared toward heaven, where he was wont to hold sweet intercourse with his spiritual kinsfolk, nothing seemed to him to be the same as it had been before. He felt as an invalid, into whose darkened chamber a single errant sunbeam has forced its way, not to cheer, but to distract.

Soon the waters of Lake Tchad opened their wide expanse to his view. The sight recalled him to the fears he had heard uttered respecting the disturbed political state of the country. He had an idea of descending to the capital to obtain information, for his new friends, the settlers in Atlantika, were very uneasy on the subject. They considered themselves in danger.

On approaching the city, he perceived a commotion. People and troops were in rapid movement. Smoke and flames were rising from some of the principal buildings. In place of descending at once, he decided to approach only near enough to obtain information as to what was going on. On perceiving him, the multitude sent up a great cry. He paused a few score feet over their

heads, and let down a cord with a label appended, bearing the words, "Any mails for Europe?" as was the custom with air-couriers.

A message was sent up, saying that no mails were ready; that there was a revolution in Soudan; that the Emperor had disappeared, and that a large sum was offered for his capture. It was his palace that was in flames. But the accompanying newspapers would tell all the news, the principal item of which was the establishment of a republic. No further disturbance was expected, unless the Emperor should return with a force. The republic meant peace, economy, and fraternity.

Criss continued his journey re-assured. Soon the vast and fertile alluvial tracts began to give place to patches of sand; the growing temperature of the blasts of hot air which now continually assailed him, told him that he was approaching a region which not even modern skill and enterprise had attempted to redeem from its ancient reproach of being the most arid and baneful region in the world—the vast and dreaded Sahara, dreariest por

tion of the dreary waste that stretches from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. It opened upon him now, the sandy ocean of the illimitable desert, whose ceaseless and burning billows none could traverse, save at the risk of being overwhelmed and scorched to death. A curse to itself, and a curse to two continents, whose climate it marred, pitilessly mocking man's longing for more of the fair earth on which to rear homes for his children, the Sahara bade defiance alike to the plough, the railway, and the canal, and seemed even to resent the passage above it of the swift-winged aeromotive of our times; for it whirled far aloft columns of fine sand, which blinded the aeronaut and clogged the delicate works of his machinery. "Why," thought Criss, as he began to recognise the influences of this mysterious region, "why did not the subterranean forces of the earth heave it a few hundred feet higher, and give man another continent for his use, or leave it a few hundred feet lower, and give him another sea? Was it as a perpetual challenge to man, to prove his impotence or his puissance, that nature had bequeathed him such a legacy?"

Criss has got far within the limits of the dreaded desert, when morning breaks. The night has been perfectly calm, and the air is clear and free from dust. Fascinated and attracted by the place and its reputation, he flies low and leisurely along. A sea of sand ! Surely it must be the watery ocean itself that rolls beneath him, boiling and bubbling in vast blue billows, as far as the eye can reach. He descends towards it to examine the phenomenon more closely. The air becomes hotter as he does so, but there is not a breath of wind to account for the motion of the billows, which he sees rolling over and over each other as if propelled upwards from beneath. The red sun rises, and straightway the tossing ocean beneath him mingles crimson and gold with its blue, as he has never known the ocean of waters to do, nor even the clouds of the air over which he has been wont to ride. He arrests his downward course, but the many-coloured billows seem to rise towards him. Already he descries their gleams and sprays shooting past him. Now the billows themselves are around and above him. He is engulfed, and yet he

breathes freely. Ah ! It is a mirage of the desert that welcomes him to the heart of the Sahara.

It is impossible to judge how far he is from the ground. He does not suppose that the phenomenon extends to any great height, and having ascertained its nature, he prepares to re-ascend. But a sound catches his ears, a sound of tearing and rending, followed by harsh cries of terror, pain, and despair. Listening intently, he ascertains that the place whence the sounds proceed is not stationary, for sometimes it is nearer to him than at others ; but in no case many rods from him. While thus listening, and scarcely heeding his machine, he feels beneath him the touch as of soft yielding ground. The Ariel stops erect, and Criss, standing up in his car, calls aloud, in English,—

“ Does anyone want help ? ”

He pauses and listens, but there is no reply. Again he cries, this time, remembering where he is, in Arabic,—

“ If anyone wants help, let him speak.”

An answer came, rapidly and eagerly ; and

apparently from one so close to him as to make him look quickly round. But nothing was visible through the mist of the mirage. The reply was in the pure Arabic spoken by the better classes in Soudan. Criss readily interpreted it.

"Say first who offers help. Of what nation?"

"English," replied Criss.

"English for certain, and no Bornouse?"

"An English and a true man, for certain," replied Criss; "a traveller on the way back to London from South Africa."

"You speak my language almost too well for me to trust you," was the response. "Say, how are you travelling?"

"Alone, and in my own car—an electromagnetic flying machine. But what and wherefore do you fear?"

"I do not fear. You cannot be Bornouse, for they know not the use of such machines. I am a fugitive from the insurrection, and am injured; and there may be pursuers on my track."

There was plenty of light, and the speakers were close together, but they were still in-

visible to each other. Their voices sounded strange and hollow, through the dense and laden air. Criss learnt that the sufferer had fallen while endeavouring to cross the Sahara in an old-fashioned aeromotive, in the use of which he had but little skill. He had been badly wounded before, and now was still more crippled by his fall, and by the struggles of the machinery while expending its power.

Finding him still reluctant, and knowing the danger a desert-storm would have for his apparatus, Criss said,

"You must decide at once. Either allow me to serve you, or say farewell."

"I shall perish miserably if left here," was the answer, in a somewhat pettish tone.

"Can worse befall you through me, whoever I may be?" asked Criss.

"I will trust you," answered the voice; "but how are you to find me?"

"Leave that to me," said Criss; "but do not stir from where you are."

"Alas! I cannot move any more; for my machine is exhausted, and I too am fainting."

Had there been any holding ground, Criss

would have secured the Ariel against the chances of any wind that might arise, and stepped out, holding a string to serve as clue by which to find it again. This being out of the question, he leaned over and drove a stake as far as he could into the yielding sand, fastened to it one end of a long cord, and then made the Ariel move slowly to the other end of it. During this process, the two men spoke at intervals, in order to ascertain their distance and direction from each other.

"You are going quite away from me," said the stranger, in a feeble and querulous tone, as Criss reached the end of his line.

"I shall soon be nearer," said Criss, delighted to find that the length of his cord was sufficient to make so easily appreciable a difference in their distance. "I have got my centre and my distance now, and am about to describe a circle with them. Keep quiet, and directly the string catches you, let me know."

A few moments more, and the manœuvre was successful. The line caught against the crippled aeromotive, and Criss drawing it in,

came close up to it. The two men could now see each other distinctly. The stranger was a fine-looking man, apparently of mixed race, between fifty and sixty years of age, and richly dressed.

"You do not look English," he remarked, after a keen scrutiny of Criss's face.

"I believe it is only in blood that I am not English," said Criss; "but now let me examine your wounds?"

"Not now, not now. I want to get further from danger. Can you carry me to a place of safety?"

"I can carry you, but not your baggage," said Criss; "but I assure you that you are too far out in the desert to be discovered. None could see us, if they tried. My lighting upon you is so extraordinary a coincidence that it is not likely to be repeated. It is true, we might telegraph to them, but none can telegraph to us, for none know where we are."

And he insisted upon examining his wounds.

The stranger, who was evidently a man of distinction, and accustomed to exercise

authority, could not repress an expression of amused surprise at the kindly imperious way in which this youth took command of him, and directed his movements.

"One leg broken," said Criss, "and one arm ; a bad wound in the head, and several bruises on the body."

"Those are all from the fall," said the stranger. "Flying machines are prohibited in Soudan. The people are too barbarous to be trusted with them. I alone possessed one, an old one, which I kept secretly against emergencies, but I have little skill in using it. Yet I think I should have got safely in it to the fortress of Asben, where I have friends, but for the wounds received in the insurrection, which prevented me from managing it aright. But look at my left side, just below the ribs—I feel a hurt there."

"A small bullet wound," said Criss, examining the part indicated; "but it has ceased to bleed. It is impossible for me to find Asben, or any other place in the desert in this mist. Even were I to ascend to the clear sky and take an observation, I should inevitably lose the position on coming down

again. Besides, in such times the loyalty even of your friends in Asben may be dubious. I propose, therefore, that you let me take you to Algiers. I have friends there, of whom one is a first-rate doctor. When you are well, I will take you to any place you choose."

The stranger assented ; but on endeavouring to move into the Ariel, he nearly fainted with pain and weakness. Criss then administered a cordial. It was only with considerable difficulty that the change was at length effected.

"Is there anything here of small bulk that you wish to take?" asked Criss, pointing to the baggage.

"They contain little beside wine and provisions. I have enough about me to pay any moderate expenses for some little time to come."

And he looked wistfully at Criss, as if to divine his disposition respecting the laws of property.

"There, one or two of those little boxes may as well come with us," he said, carelessly indicating the packages in question. "They

will not materially add to your burden, and it would be a pity to leave all my little knick-nacks to be buried in the sand."

They were ready to start, and Criss looked around him. So intent had they both been upon personal matters, that they had not observed the change that had taken place. Criss was startled at beholding the new aspect which nature had assumed in the last few minutes.

The mirage had entirely vanished, and from the somewhat elevated position on which the Ariel was resting,—the summit of a huge sandy roller,—happily for the present at rest until the wind should give it a fresh impetus on its ever westward course towards the Atlantic,—the vast desert lay spread around them, an illimitable ocean of sand. The spectacle struck vividly upon Criss's unfamiliar eyes. There was a beauty in it which he had not suspected, but of a kind to make him shudder at its absolute desolateness.

"Surely, surely," he murmured as he gazed, "this is not what was meant by the promise

that there should be no more sea! Fancy the whole earth thus!"

"Praying? and with your back to the East?" asked the stranger, who had not caught Criss's words.

When they were well aloft, and on their course, Criss told him his thought.

"You know and can quote our Bible, and yet say you are English? Why, I have always understood that the English were a nation of infidels, who had banished the Bible from their land."

"On the contrary," said Criss, "we consider no education complete that does not include a knowledge of it. Though it is true we do not regard it as a Fetich, to be adored but not comprehended. That we should call superstition."

"Superstition? Ah, yes, you English, I know, look upon my people as superstitious. We regard you as irreligious."

"Besides," added Criss, "I believe I have both Hebrew and Greek blood in me. So that I have a manifold right to know something of the literature of those languages."

"I knew there was something Eastern in

you the moment I saw you," exclaimed the wounded man. "And I felt there was a link between us. I, too, have Hebrew blood in me. I am descended from—" And here he stopped, and appeared to be faint from the pain and exhaustion.

"You came across Bornou," he asked, suddenly. "Did you hear what was going on at the capital?"

Criss told him that he only paused for a moment, to offer to take mails, and that they told him the Emperor had disappeared. The palace, too, was in flames.

"Oh, those cursed traitors," muttered the fugitive; "but I shall be avenged. In vain will they seek for that which they desire."

And his faintness came over him again.

After another dose of the cordial, he said,

"I am weaker even than I thought. When can we reach a city? And are you sure Algiers is the best place for me?"

Criss told him that a few hours more would bring them there, and that it had been famous as a sanitarium ever since the old French occupation. He proposed, too, to place him in the hands of a doctor of whose skill he was

well aware, and under the protection of the British Minister, who was a great personal friend of his own. Criss added also that he himself would have to proceed almost at once to England, when he had seen him properly cared for.

"You will leave me!" exclaimed the stranger. "Will anything induce you to remain? I can reward you—indeed!"

"It is impossible," said Criss; "but if necessary, I can return, and that soon."

"I dread the intrigues of my enemies, if they learn where I am. I have never been friendly with the Mediterranean States."

"Our Minister is all powerful. Besides, ¹⁶ he will do anything for me."

"You speak as if you were somebody, and had influence, and were not a mere courier."

"Every Englishman is Somebody, whether he be courier or not," replied Criss; "but I am not a courier." And he gave the stranger an outline of his history.

"What is your age?" he asked.

Criss told him he was going home to complete his majority.

"And your name?"

Criss told him.

"Can there be another of that name?"

"Certainly not," Criss said, and told him generally how he came to be so called.

He sank back, murmuring,

"Christmas Carol! twenty - one years!
Christmas Carol! Wonderful are the ways
of the Almighty!"

A little longer, and Criss, enlisting the sympathies of his friends the Minister and the doctor, had fulfilled all his promises to his unfortunate passenger. He then went to take his leave. The fugitive made no further effort to detain him, but implored a promise that he would return to him if possible; and added—

"I know not whether I shall recover. My impression is that I shall not. If I do not, I adjure you to observe as a last injunction of the sacred dead, what I am about to say to you. You see this small packet. None but you must know of its contents. I will place your name upon it. If the rebellion in Sou-dan fails, present it to the Emperor. It will win for you whatever consideration is within

his power to show. Yet it is not for reward, but as the sacreddest duty, that you will do this. Should the rebellion succeed, and the Empire not be restored, the contents are—. But I will leave directions in writing.”

Criss said that he would fulfil the injunction to the letter ; and the stranger declared himself content. There was that about the youth which inspired a confidence which no protestations could have produced. When he started for London the packet was already entrusted to the British Minister. The account given him of the patient by the doctor, determined him to lose no time in returning again to Algiers.

CHAPTER VI.

HE time was Christmas Eve; the place, Lord Avenil's private rooms in The Triangle. The following morning would see Criss of age, and in possession of his fortune. Avenil and Bertie differed as to the feelings with which their ward would receive the intelligence about to be broken to him. The event proved that they were both right, and both wrong. The old lawyer who had from the first been entrusted with the legal part of the business, was present; as also, of course, was Criss, but two days arrived from Algiers.

During dinner, Criss recounted his recent adventures, making the wreck and the rescue of Nannie, and the subsequent flight over the length of Africa the most prominent points.

After dinner they proceeded to business. The lawyer first read aloud a brief narrative of the finding of Criss in the balloon on the iceberg. He knew something of this before, but the reference to his probable parents and descent, possessed for him an interest that was ever fresh and vivid. He was much touched on learning that the proceeds of the valuables found in the balloon had been regarded as belonging to himself, the only surviving occupant, and so scrupulously husbanded for his benefit, that the finder, Bertie, had continued to work hard for his own living, accepting nothing out of Criss's fortune beyond what had actually been expended on him.

The particulars of the fortune itself formed the last item. One deduction, the lawyer remarked, might appear large, and doubtless it was so. This was for the item of taxation. But it was not large when they considered the advantage given in return for it, in the shape of perfect protection. The fiscal system of the country being based, as it had long been, exclusively upon realised property, in order to remove, as far as possible, all

burdens from industry and earnings, fortunes such as that before them bore the chief brunt of taxation. If their young friend had included among his studies the history of British Economics, he must know that nothing had tended so much towards the security of property, as the introduction of such a measure. For it reconciled the industrial classes, which form the great bulk of the community, to the accumulation by individuals of the gigantic fortunes for which modern times were distinguished. In the foremost ranks of such fortunate individuals he had the great pleasure of reckoning their ward and friend, Mr. Christmas Carol. "And for fear," he concluded, "you should think I have made a mistake, and said thousands when I ought to have said hundreds, and millions when I ought to have said thousands; here are the figures for you to read yourself. Here also, in this casket, are some of the smaller jewels which belong to you, for it was not thought necessary or advisable to dispose of the whole of them." And he placed the document in Criss's hands.

Even Bertie was startled at the total, for

though aware of the original amount, he had not thought of the enormous addition which would be made by allowing it to accumulate at compound interest for nearly twenty-one years.

Criss took the document mechanically, but did not look at it. His eyes were bent upon the ground, as if he were endeavouring by a process of intense cogitation to grasp the whole subject. At length he looked up, and said,—

“I am very glad indeed to be so rich, and most grateful to you to whom I owe it all. Indeed, I look upon it as a debt, and not as a possession. It is yours far more than mine, and I hold it as a free gift, to be resumed at your pleasure, and spent as you approve. But I want to be your debtor for one kindness more. I want no one else to know of it. I feel that it is only by keeping it a profound secret that I can use this wealth as it can best be used. Let me pass through the world known simply as Criss Carol, with a tolerable independence, otherwise I feel that both my power and my satisfaction will be seriously imperilled.”

The old lawyer was the first to speak. After looking towards Avenil and Bertie, and seeing that neither of them were ready, he said, with that bland smile which appears to have been an appanage of lawyers ever since, according to the old legend, the first one put his foot into Eden,—

“I suspect that the difficulty of keeping your secret will not be on our part so much as on your own, my dear young sir. My own impression is, that a young man might as well expect to walk about with Mount Vesuvius under his arm in a state of eruption, and expect people not to notice it, as to keep all this gold hidden from view.”

“At any rate,” remarked Bertie, “we will do our best to hold our tongues, until you release us; eh, Avenil?”

“Of course, if Criss soberly and seriously insists upon secrecy,” replied Avenil. “But I suspect his is only the natural reluctance everyone has to being made the subject of scrutiny and observation while in a position in which he does not yet feel himself at home. A little later I think and hope he will learn that the mere fact of a man being

known to be in the possession of a great faculty or power for good, and therefore that great things are expected from him, is calculated to operate admirably as a stimulus. Now I, my dear boy, have ventured already to cherish plans for you. Your fortune constitutes an engine of enormous power, socially and politically, if you choose so to apply it. And that power is as vastly increased by its existence being generally known, as the power of capital is increased by credit. For credit is capital *plus* character. The very reputation of being a young millionaire, with good education, extensive knowledge of the world (at least, of the outside of it), and aspirations towards a career of usefulness, would, if applied in channels of which I am cognisant, at once secure your election to the lower chamber of the legislature, with the highest place in the land within your reach."

"All this may come in time," said Criss, unable to avoid smiling at his guardian's inventory of his advantages. "But I think you will allow that I am yet full young to turn legislator."

"Not a bit too young to begin to learn

that or any other business, if you mean to excel in it," interposed the lawyer.

"But do you not consider," continued Criss, "that the circumstances of my origin impose some obligation upon me?"

"Of what kind?" asked Avenil.

"I may have a father living, and in need of me. These mysterious jewels, too, do they impose no responsibility? It seems to me as not impossible that a sacred duty may reveal itself in connection with them. Your kind care has made it possible for me to redeem them and still be very rich. If I am really of the Holy Stock, and lawful inheritor of royal heir-looms, it is not difficult to imagine duties arising which cannot at present be foreseen."

This speech made Avenil and Bertie involuntarily look at each other, for it recalled my grandmother's remarks at the consultation of many years before.

Avenil was the first to answer him.

"My dear boy," he said, "I can quite understand and sympathise with your feelings under the circumstances. The sudden accession to an enormous power such as has

come into your hands, is sure to suggest, to a man of conscience, the incurrence of corresponding responsibilities, and open a whole new region of possibilities, or rather, impossibilities. Such suggestions as your last seem to me very remote from the category of the practical."

"As for redeeming the crown diamonds of the Empire of Central Africa," said Bertie, "for such you know your jewels now are,—if you want to do that, the revolution will probably make it easy. But I doubt whether the Emperor would have consented to be bound by his agreement. The superstitious value he attached to their possession would have prevented that. He might, however, be willing to pay handsomely for the privilege of retaining them; that is, in the event of his remaining Emperor, and being able to do so."

"How would you spend this money?" said Criss, suddenly addressing Avenil.

"I? Oh, my dear boy, you know my foible. It has been the same ever since, as a child, I was caught putting a thermometer into the pepper and the mustard, to find out

why they burnt my mouth. Experiment is the basis of Science, and Science has for its end the improvement of humanity. I have often held forth to you respecting that which I regard as the Science of Sciences."

"You mean the relations of capital, labour, and land?"

"Yes, in some measure; but you have never yet, I think, learned to see the subject as I do, from a religious point of view." He said this with a smile; for he knew that it was precisely because of what Criss deemed the lack of the religious element in his character that they had never been in complete accord.

"You see," he continued, "I prefer the active to the subjective or speculative form of the religious sentiment, and regard thinking and working as the chiefest of man's functions. Indeed, for me, the term *work* in itself means the combination of wishing, willing, and acting. It was because you would have capital that I wanted you to have an estate. The mere labourer puts into his land the power only of a single pair of hands, and generally of an undeveloped brain. The capitalist

works it with the accumulated powers of several generations of mind and body in combination. For capital is stored industry. As the coal-beds, to which England owed its greatness until their approaching exhaustion led to the discovery of something more efficient, represented millions of years of stored sun-power, so capital represents the accumulated toil of ages. There is no longer the old antagonism between it and labour. Such antagonism was but the result of bad management, and was as absurd as an antagonism between the industry of the past and that of the present—which, indeed, it was. I don't quite coincide in the distinction our legal friend here drew just now between property actually realised, and property in process of realisation. To tax capital is to tax wages, which are paid out of capital. I differ from him also as to the propriety of making the rich pay nearly all the expenses of government. Because a man is rich, is no reason why he should be robbed, or pay for the protection of his neighbours. But this is not our subject just now. You, my dear Christmas, have in your hands such stored industry

L

as I have described, to an extent absolutely unprecedented for one of your years. If you expend a million a year, and let the rest accumulate for another twenty years, as it has already done, your fortune will exceed the National Debt, whose magnitude so alarmed our ancestors previously to the Emancipation. But it is a small matter that there be money in the world. What does matter, is the hand that holds it. You have the money, and the disposition to use it well. My fear is only, that in trying to use it too well; that is, in aiming at the impracticably high and absolute, you will fail altogether. Aiming at the ideal, you will lose the real. The physical good of man must be the basis of the moral. The grand mistake of the ancient world lay in its commencing at the wrong end. It inverted the Pyramid. Placing religion first, they proceeded from it to morals, and thence to physics. That is, they built on that of which they knew the least. From the unknown and unknowable, they inferred the knowable. It was because their religion, while claiming to be the basis of morals, consisted in assumptions, that it failed to re-

generate the world. We moderns, on the contrary, starting from the physical and verifiable, make morals the basis of religion. We cannot, as did our forefathers, even imagine a religion divorced from, or antagonistic to morality. We hold it as impossible for the Divine Will to be in conflict with the moral law, as with the physical. For us, Religion signifies the relation of the part to the whole, as Morality is the relation of part to part. We must learn the smaller and nearer lesson first. From our duty to the finite springs the idea of our duty to the Infinite. If we care not for that which is within our reach, we are not likely to care for that which lies beyond. The love of the seen must precede and produce the love of the unseen. Mysticism is not necessarily insanity.

“ You deem me deficient in religious sentiment,” he continued, in a tone verging on solemnity. “ Know, then, that for me, the surface of this earth is as the floor of heaven, and that my ideal of life is to tread it, as the angels of whom you are wont to dream, with firm confidence in its capacity to sustain the higher life of all best aspirations ; and that

the only proof of faith is work. It is by work alone that wishing and willing transmute themselves into deeds. We are products of the earth. To improve the soil, is to go a long way towards improving the produce. This is the function of Capital; that is, of work. You have only to find an occupation worthy of yourself and your means; and your floating ideas, now vague and undefined, will gradually arrange themselves harmoniously and musically around it.

“One word more. Do not think I wish you to go out of your way to compass some formal eccentric destiny. My meaning is, that you should rather let your future spring out of elements which come naturally in your way. Many a man courts failure, and wins it, by rushing into a position for which he has no natural call or aptitude.”

Rarely in his intercourse with Criss had Avenil indicated so decided an appreciation of the spiritual side of things. His present tone excited a lively feeling of satisfaction in the youth's breast, and he felt as if he had scarcely done justice before to the character of his guardian's mind, and the school of

which he was so distinguished a member. Criss was accustomed to hear students of science characterised by his friends among the Remnant as irreligious and atheistic. He was glad to have such evidence that the epithets were unmeaning or undeserved.

Bertie then alluded to the event of the morrow, and invited the whole party to spend the day at his cottage on the Surrey Downs. Criss expressed his readiness, and added that he must immediately afterwards run over to Algiers, to see the wounded man he had picked up in the desert.

"You certainly seem born for the rescue of folks in trouble," remarked Avenil. "I suppose some mishap is constantly occurring to somebody, and as you are always on the move, you naturally light upon the victims. By the way, I see that this evening's papers give an account of the deposition and flight of the Emperor of Soudan, and mention that he is supposed to have perished in the desert while endeavouring to reach Mourzouk or Darfur, and that he must have taken the crown jewels with him. That hideous Sahara!" he added, "it is even a greater

nuisance to our hemisphere than the desert interior of Australia is to that southern world. But for Africa, I suspect that Europe would have been far more habitable than it is."

"That is exactly what occurred to me at the time," said Criss. "And I thought it such a pity that all the abundant rivers which belong to it, should carry their waters right away from its centre, instead of flowing through it."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entry of a servant, who stated that an aerial parcel-express carrier had brought a package for Mr. Carol to be delivered to himself only, and for which he must have his receipt.

Criss left the room, and returning a few moments afterwards with a small box and an open letter in his hands, he told his friends that he had just learnt the death of the man he had left in Algiers. The letter he had read was from the Minister, who wrote that he would find within the box a communication in Arabic, which the dying man wrote himself, and which, with the other contents of the

box, he had assured him was of the utmost importance.

"Is there any pledge of secrecy?" asked Avenil.

"None, now that the poor man is dead," said Criss, "and I shall be only too glad to let you have as much information as I myself possess."

And opening the dead man's letter, he set himself to give its purport in English. Before he had translated the first sentence, his hand dropped, and he exclaimed,—

"It was the Emperor himself!"

"What!" cried Avenil, Bertie, and the lawyer together; "the fugitive whom you rescued, the man who has sent you that packet? Open it, open it at once! It was he who bought your jewels!"

"See for yourselves," said Criss, "while I read his letter."

With eager hands—for, grave men though they were, the singularity of the coincidence was enough to disturb their gravity—they opened the box. More eagerly yet they opened the casket which it contained, a golden one, with a diadem in a monogram on

the outside. They then removed some layers of cotton ; when, in superb and serene beauty, like the sun surrounded by his planets, a magnificent diamond was revealed, with a number of smaller ones attached to it in an oval setting. Then Avenil read the inscription, which was in Arabic, and ran thus :—

“The Talisman of Solomon, and crown jewels of Theodoros, Emperor of Soudan.”

A second compartment contained a number of other jewels of remarkable size and beauty ; and beneath this, at the bottom of the casket, was the duplicate of the bill of sale and covenant to restore them to the agents or representatives of Christmas Carol, at the same price at which they had been bought, should the demand be made within one year of the said Christmas Carol attaining the age of twenty-one.

“Here are more millions for you,” said Avenil, handing him the casket. “But pray what says his unhappy Majesty in his letter ? Did he know that you were the Christmas Carol named here, and does he make you a present of them ?”

"You shall hear it," returned Criss, and he read thus, translating as he went on :—

"Theodoros, Emperor of Abyssinia and Soudan, now dying at Algiers of wounds received from dastard rebels and traitors, to the young Englishman, Israelite, and Greek, Christmas Carol.

"But for the aid of thy hand, my bones would now be whitening the Sahara. But for the true spirit in thine eyes, my jewels, the sacred Talisman of Solomon, the cherished ornaments of my crown, and ancient heir-looms of my family, would now be lying beneath the sands of the desert, hidden for ever from the eye of man. So many dangers and chances have they survived since the day when they gleamed upon the diadem of my ancestor Solomon, that it is no impiety to suppose that the Divine Framer of Destiny reserves them for further glories. But it is not vouchsafed to me to know what the future will bring forth.

"How they first came into your hands I know not ; perchance you received them from him by whom many years ago they were

sacrilegiously rapt away from the kingdom, even from my Uncle, to whom as Regent in my minority their guardianship was entrusted. Exiled from the country, he roamed the world, and then settled in Damascus, where he dwelt long. But when I sought him there, he had mysteriously disappeared. He was of the elder branch, but illegitimate. Mine alone is the line of the rightful sovereign.

"I leave a Son, sole heir to my throne and crown. Should he become Emperor, these gems would be his, save for the right which you possess of re-purchasing them. I need not say 'Deal kindly by him, as you have dealt by his father!' for you will do so. And to you doing so, and asking what you will, he will grant the half of his kingdom, even to the turning of the Sahara into a smiling garden, as one of our proverbs hath it.

"Should he not come into his imperial rights, you may serve him better than by restoring to him the gems. Who knows but that in serving him you will be serving your own blood. Your lineaments, as well as your

connection with these jewels, indicate you as not far removed from our royal race. But of this I know nought. Wonderful are the ways of the Almighty. Peace be with you. Farewell."

CHAPTER VII.

HE conversation at Bertie's next day turned much upon Criss's recent adventures. His guardians were chiefly struck by his apparent indifference to the wealth of which he found himself possessed, and his pre-occupation by the idea of responsibility imposed upon him by his position. It was as if he had lost his independence, instead of gaining it, by being so rich. He was much affected, too, by the strangeness and nature of the coincidence that thus, on the eve of his birthday, revealed a clue to the mystery of his birth.

"You will take an interest now," remarked Avenil to him, "in watching the telegrams to learn the progress of political events in Central Africa. Should the Emperor's son

succeed in recovering the throne, he will be ready to accord a warm welcome to the rescuer of his father, the restorer of his crown jewels, and a possible blood-relation. But you must not let him detain you from us as a new-found friend from whom he cannot part."

"You think there are parts of the world where capital can be more usefully employed than in Central Africa?" remarked Criss, with an arch smile, the meaning of which Avenil was at no loss to interpret and appropriate.

"Employ it," he said, "upon Races whose capacity for a high civilisation renders them worthy of preservation. It is not in tropical Africa that such can subsist."

"I suspect you are more than half of the opinion I found expressed somewhere, that the tropics are a mistake altogether," returned Criss; "and would have preferred that the land of the earth, instead of running north and south, had been placed east and west, in broad belts, and confined to the temperate zone, with the sea occupying all the polar and equatorial spaces."

"It is possible that it was so once," replied

Avenil. "The present configuration of the continents indicates the action of strong currents setting continuously in one direction, parallel and not transversely to their coasts, just as would occur were the earth to revolve from north to south instead of from west to east—"

"Come, come!" exclaimed Bertie, "we won't waste to-day upon serious talk. Here are a number of guests to whom you must pay attention, some of them your old school-fellows, Criss; and all your tribe, Avenil."

It was a happy evening, for Criss was much beloved, and all rejoiced in his accession to man's estate and a position of affluence; though of the extent of the latter none but his guardians had any conception. Together with the respect and affection which Criss inspired, there was mingled a certain sentiment of curiosity and wonderment. All with whom he came into contact felt that he was not completely of them or their kind, but had a life apart, and into which they could not enter. He was to them as a stranger, who arrives and takes up his abode in a new

country, having spent his previous life amid scenes and associations altogether unknown to his new neighbours. Of these he learns the outward ways, and adopts the outward speech and garb and manners ; but they all the time feel that his mind is filled with memories altogether foreign to his present surroundings, and to which they have no clue. However much they may admire and believe in him, they yet never feel that he sympathises entirely with them. If that which they see of his character does not inspire them with respect for its quality or power, their very ignorance of him in the past produces mistrust of him for the future. If their estimate be favourable, the sense of mystery about him serves to engender a certain amount of awe. Suggesting the unknown, he suggests also the infinite. Respecting one, whose life and conversation was known to be so much in the unfamiliar heavens as Criss's, curiosity ran strong to see how he would fulfil his part on earth. He was evidently not of the brood of the commonplace, who so readily become *au fait* of the small technicalities of life. The light that shone from

him had its source within, and it rested not on the trivial. The best painters of the time despaired of rendering the translucent envelope of his body through which his luminous soul shone forth.

Avenil's dominant feeling respecting such a temperament was one of apprehension. One of his reasons for urging Criss to practical work, was founded in his alarm lest the very sensitiveness of his organisation should work its own ruin. Steady occupation he held to be the best cure for a tendency to the *over-soul*. He hailed the recent incidents in Criss's career, chiefly for the effect they might have in drawing him to the practical. For the same reason he would have hailed his marriage, even with an inferior nature. In his eyes Criss was made of the stuff that has afforded martyrs to the cross and the stake; that is, the stuff of which enthusiasts for an idea are made; and to Avenil such enthusiasm was the offspring of a taint of insanity.

The party at Ariel Cottage included the Bishop of the diocese, who, as chief inspector

of the National Schools of the district, had long known Criss, and knowing him, had always loved him. Another also of Criss's ecclesiastical friends, the Dean of St. Paul's, was present. His festival in the Metropolitan Cathedral had taken place in the morning, and Criss had attended it. For he was strongly attached to St. Paul's, which standing in the dense and busy heart of the great city, was in its finished perfection, for him as for all enthusiastic citizens, a monument of the final overthrow of the sectarian spirit in these isles, and of the triumph of the sentiment of citizenship and humanity over that of church and creed. It was to Criss alone of aerialists that the Dean had given permission to alight and rest on the summit of his church.

In the evening the whole party adjourned to the Cathedral on the Downs, a noble edifice belonging to the period of the Emancipation. It was mainly built and endowed from the proceeds of the sale of a number of churches and chapels belonging to the various sects into which the population of the district had once been divided. These, sharing the general enthusiasm of the nation on shaking

off the yoke of mediævalism, at finding that the widest cultivation of their intellectual and affectional faculties, was not incompatible with the exercise of the religious sentiment, and that the religious sentiment itself is a living, and not an historical affection,—brought the property which they possessed as separate and hostile sects, and cast it into the lap of the Establishment, to be expended in converting that ancient organisation into a National institution for promoting the general welfare, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, of the entire nation.

Brought up, as I was, in the narrow sectarianism of the orthodox "*Remnant*," and only recently made a partaker of the Emancipation, I can better than most of my readers, appreciate the blessedness of the change which our country then underwent. Accustomed as most of us are to it, we have need to be careful students of history to realise the difference between England torn and rent by theological and ecclesiastical divisions, and England in the enjoyment of unanimity of sentiment, even where opinions differ. What a contrast there is between the feelings

with which I contemplate the harsh exclusiveness wherein my own youth was instructed to restrict and confine itself to the narrowest and most revolting conceptions of the Universe, and the sentiments evoked by this broad, genial, capacious edifice about which are entwined the hearts of all the surrounding dwellers, from their earliest youth to their latest age.

The Bishop himself,—(I have since made his acquaintance, and learnt to regret his death,)—came in for his full share of the warm feelings which clustered around his Cathedral. He fulfilled the ideal of a Bishop of the period, whose functions comprised the feeding of the lambs of his flock as well as the tending of the sheep. The steadiness with which he maintained the rational character of the teaching given, both in the schools and the churches of his diocese, won the highest confidence of all parents. Holding fast to the doctrine, that it is the function of education to make boys and girls into good and capable men and women, and at the same time to develop their respective individualities ; his administration has been notable for

its success in producing valuable citizens. An illustration of his width of spirit is to be found in his choice of a motto when one of his parishioners desired to add an inscription as a decoration to the Cathedral :—" All *sects* abandon, ye who enter here."

In no spirit of perfunctory routine, but thoroughly *con amore*, did the good Bishop perform whatever he undertook. The ancient festival of Christmas was one in which he had special delight. Taking as a model the old-fashioned Oratorio which we derive from our ancestors of the seventeenth or eighteenth century, he loved to found on it some musical service, which while representing objectively the season of the year, yet possessed an esoteric significance for those who were capable of perceiving it. But what that significance should be, he dictated to none. It was for Science to ascertain and fix phenomena. It was for Art to represent them; and for Nature and the individual soul to settle their interpretation between them. Thus only, he held, could God speak freely to man. These services were sung by an admir-

able choir, which he had selected from among all ages and classes, of both sexes, in the neighbourhood. And most enthusiastically did they enter into the spirit of their task, and flock to the Cathedral on the occasions in question.

It was a model Christmas-day for the climate. The snow had fallen at intervals, and a thin layer now covered the ground. When, towards nine o'clock, the party started from Bertie's for the Cathedral, the wind had fallen, the sky was clear, and the stars shone out their brightest. As they passed by villa and garden, the trees and shrubs crackled and glistened in the frost. The bells rang out a joyous peal. The whole district was on the alert. Everybody was going to the Oratorio. It was known that the Bishop had requested the choir to observe strict secrecy respecting the piece to be performed. This added to the interest.

The service of the evening was prefaced by the Bishop with a brief address, rather colloquial than formal; and there were not

wanting those among Bertie's party who fancied that it possessed a greater capacity than usual for personal application. During its delivery the vast building was wrapped in gloom, the only light visible being that which directed its rays on the pulpit.

After a few hearty words of welcome, the Bishop said he should revert to the old ecclesiastical custom of taking a sentence from the ancient sacred book of Christendom, as the key-note of his remarks. That sentence was, "These Three are One;" a sentence which, though well known to be ungentine, was not, therefore, necessarily untrue. The object of all right reverence, he said, is a compound object, of which each constituent is distinct and complete in itself, and yet incapable of being detached from the others. Nations, as well as individuals, in seeking to effect such detachment, had invariably degraded their religion to a kind of polytheism, and the degeneration of their faith had involved that of themselves. The Greeks worshipped Beauty, finding their ideal in physical humanity. The Jews aimed at goodness or obedience to God, but ignoring a human cri-

terion imagined a deity independent of a moral law. We ourselves, again, were too liable to give the supremacy to the Useful. But the Holy Trinity of the excellences could not thus be divided. There is no Beauty without Use ; no Use without Goodness ; no Goodness without Beauty. Each individual present probably felt drawn more towards some one of these sacred elements than towards the others. The most fortunate were those for whom all three possessed an equal attraction. The greatest advance man had ever made was when he erected his instinctive love of Beauty, Goodness, and Use, into a religion, and resolved to accord his best reverence to One whom he deemed to excel all others in the possession of them. Man's instinct had then proved too strong for the priesthoods ; and in order to retain their influence, these had to give up their deities, which were but caricatures of humanity, and adopt the ideal recognised and insisted upon by men. The transatlantic poet-sage struck a true key-note when he said,—

“ An honest God's the noblest work of man.”

It was true that the ideal had not always

since been maintained. It had oft been by the nations crucified, and buried, and relegated to the lowermost parts of the earth ; but like the sun, whose rising from the depths of winter and darkness, they were now met to celebrate, it had been impossible to keep it down. The greatest relapse had been when men, fancying that truth was a thing to be kept hermetically sealed as in a bottle, instead of requiring free light and air to keep it sweet and wholesome, mistook *Churchianity* for Christianity, and made religion once more a set of opinions and a profession for a Caste.

It must ever be so when we submit the sentiments, whose essence is spontaneousness and flexibility, to be devitalised and crystalised by professional formalists. Now that we have finally got rid of these, we find an infinitely freer and fuller recognition of all that was good and true in the old systems, inasmuch as we accept it for its own sake. "For ourselves," the Bishop concluded, "let us strive to be Greeks in our love of that which is beautiful ; Hebrews, in our allegiance to divine goodness ; and Englishmen

in our devotion to that which is Useful and True. And if, perchance, any of us here present be conscious of possessing exceptional powers and advantages, let us not waste ourselves and them in the search for exceptional opportunities whereon to employ them. As, in the domain of knowledge, the fact that lies nearest to us, the fact of our own existence, must ever be the starting-point for all excursions towards truths which are more remote; so, in the domain of action, the duties which lie immediately around us, and spring out of our circumstances and nature, are those to which we should first devote ourselves, trusting to Providence to find others, should such be desirable. History shows that it was only when England abandoned her useless attempts to convert savages to her own commercial and theological beliefs, and directed her whole undivided energies to the improvement of her own social and mental condition, that she became the true missionary—the missionary who can point to the happy effects of his principles in his own case as an argument for their propagation.”

The Cantata to be sung on that occasion

was a hymn of the year, the words of which were the work of a well-esteemed young member of that congregation, who first saw the light on that day twenty-one years ago.

"You will, I am sure," added the Bishop, "join me in the wish that, as is his verse, so may his and our lives be : a Christmas Carol and a song of praise, and a standard of Beauty, Goodness, and Usefulness. And may we succeed in so closely assimilating our real to our ideal, that the subjective shall become for us the objective, and faithfully reflect within us the universe that lies without us. Far be it from me to dictate to any, but for myself, I may say that the ever-recurring phenomena of the system of which we are a part, are in a striking correspondence with the phenomena of my own heart. Like the sun, whose renascence, as I have said, we this day celebrate, the ideal towards which I would fain strive, though always suffering and dying within me, is also always rising and ascending : oft obscured by the clouds and mists of doubt and difficulty, and oft again shining out with a brightness and a warmth that draws me up perforce towards it."

Criss's amazement at the Bishop's announcement was supreme. He turned for an explanation to Bertie, who sat by him.

"My dear boy," he said, "I have to ask your pardon. I found the verses some time ago, and showed them to the Bishop. He begged them of me. I did not know he would use them in this way. Considering his eagerness, and his regard for you, I am inclined to praise him for the very delicate way in which he brought in your name. Only your own friends would detect the allusion."

"I do not mind that," said Criss; "but I had forgotten all about the piece. It was a mere boyish production, and far from finished; and if I remember right, I never felt quite sure that some of the lines were altogether new, though I never succeeded in tracing them."

As he spoke there came welling through the darkness from the choir, at the far end of the chancel, in a low, wailing recitative, this lament for the departure of summer and approach of winter :—

Earth wrapped in gloom,
No light, no heat,

No fruits, no flowers ;
But storm and snow
In all our bowers.
The Lord of life sinks low
Toward the tomb.

The effect of this was weird in the extreme. A perceptible shiver ran through the whole vast congregation. Then a rich contralto voice was heard singing the plaintive verses beginning,—

Where is our laughter fled ?

to which a tenor responded in strains exciting to hope,—

Yon moon derives her light from him ;
Perchance 'tis we are turned away :
Perchance he visits other lands,
And, timely, hither back will stray,
With rays nor cold nor dim.
No need to think our Lord is dead,
Because sleep's pillow claims his head. !

But to the eye of sense there is as yet no ground for hope. Despair still strives for utterance, and finds it at the mouth of the bass, who now breaks forth into the expression of doubt, beginning,—

Declined so low,
Mid storm and snow,
Wilt ever rise again ?

A sentiment in which the chorus seems to participate, for it now indulges in the soft minor air, beginning with—

When the lamp of life burns low ;
and suddenly changing into the major with the bold aria,—

The wintry dragon claims his prey.

The sun now pausing in his downward career, the watchers are speechless with anxiety. Is the king of day still able, in this his hour of weakness, to contend successfully with the baleful powers of darkness ? During this period of doubt, the music alone is heard, in low and fitful strains of alternate hope and fear. When the last moment of the Solstice arrives, the music is hushed, and the intense stillness broken by a soprano voice singing the lovely air,—

Weak in the cradle of the year.

Then suddenly the whole strength of the chorus joins in, singing the bravura—

Baffled winter, hie thee hence !

At this juncture the Cathedral grows lighter, in correspondence with the period represented ; and the music changes its character so as to indicate the sun's growth in height and strength, as the days increase in length, until the arrival of the spring equinox. Then once again comes an interval of doubt. Will he maintain the ground gained from the powers of darkness, or recede once more towards the horizon ? This fear is expressed in the song :—

Balanced the scales of day and night.

But the sun still goes on his upward way, and so the entire chorus and orchestra, together with the grand organ, break forth into pæans of tumultuous joy, as the king of heaven ascends triumphant into the sky, revealing the kingdom of heaven, or summer, and showering down gifts on men, in food and raiment, mirth and love and marriage-blessing ; and the whole concludes with the Jubilate,—

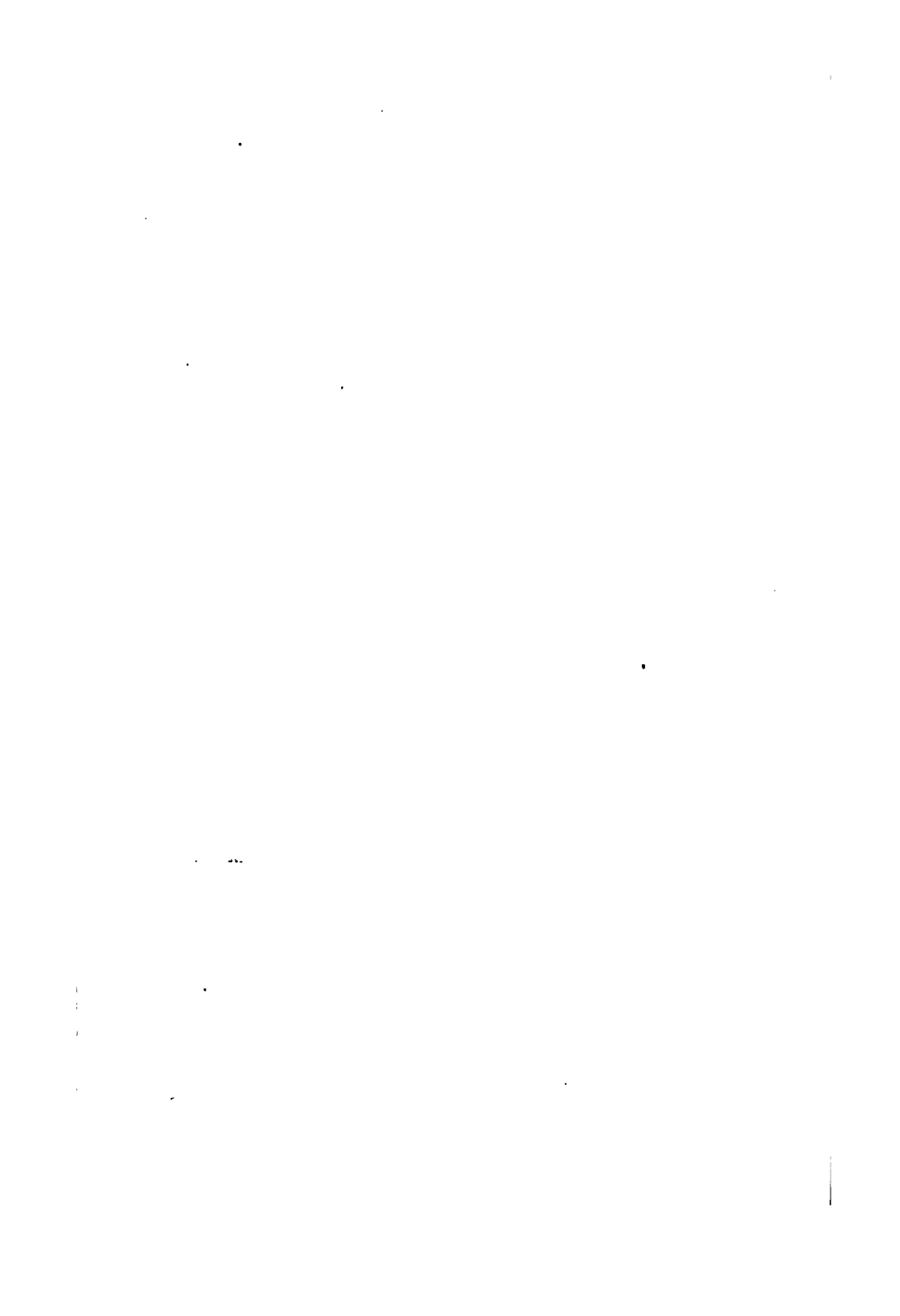
Great God of Nature, hail !
By Thee sustained we live.

Not once hast Thou appeared for all,
And left us then
To fail and fall :
But year by year Thy presence shows,
In winter's snows,
In summer's sun,
In life and death,
In joy and grief,
That Thou, and we, and all, are One :
We the parts and Thou the Whole,
We the body, Thou the soul ;
That Thou art All, and else is none !

Talking with the Bishop afterwards, Criss said that if he were to re-write it now, he would say a good word for winter ; for that even cold and darkness have their uses, and are not unmixed evils, if evils at all.

"Then you would have just spoilt it for our purpose," replied the Bishop, with a smile. "A devil of some sort is a dramatic necessity."

BOOK III.



CHAPTER I.



THE insurrection in Soudan, and the flight of the Emperor, caused great consternation in Palestine. The millionaires of Jerusalem had largely invested their wealth in loans to the Government, and mortgages on the rich cotton, sugar, shea-butter, ivory, and spice estates of Central Africa. It was their money that constructed that vast work, the Red Sea and Central African Plateau Railway, by which a main share of the products of the Continent were brought to their markets. The greater proportion of the National Debt of the country was owing to them ; and, in fact, the Empire of Soudan was in a great degree their own creation. Cut off by the sandy ocean of the Sahara from contact with the mature

civilisations of the North, and accessible only by Abyssinia and the Red Sea, the populations which had been combined into a nation and converted from Islamism to Christianity, under the vigorous dynasty to which Theodorus belonged, were still in too rudimentary a stage to be able to make a change in their form of government without imminent danger to their general stability as a nation. Their conversion to Christianity from Islamism, while facilitating their intercourse with the Jews, had still left them a superstitious people. But one of the forms taken by their superstition—to which allusion has already been made, namely, their veneration for the descendants of Solomon, and inheritors of his talismanic gems—tended to stimulate confidence in the minds of capitalists as exercising a conservative influence. They might not be altogether favourable to the Jews themselves as such, or to those sections of Christendom which traced their religious descent to the stock of David; but it was considered impossible that they should revolt against the heirs of the blood and crown of Solomon. So, when the thoroughness and

extent of the revolution was demonstrated by the appearance of the Emperor's son as a fugitive in Jerusalem, immediately after the arrival of the intelligence of his father's deposition and flight, the capitalists of Palestine saw nothing but repudiation, confiscation, and loss staring them in the face. There were, moreover, most alarming rumours respecting the situation of the white settlers in Soudan, the insurgents being believed to be hostile to the presence of independent foreign communities in their country.

It is by virtue of their wealth, and not of their courage or armaments, that the Jews of Palestine have maintained the sway which has rendered their recent history so remarkable. Whatever the project resolved upon, they have but to find the money, and there are plenty of others to find the method and the means of execution. Thus, without a soldier or sailor of their own, they avenge themselves by contract upon peoples who, being as yet too barbarous to acknowledge the solidarity of nations, and join the confederated civilisations of the world, venture to outrage their interests or their honour.

It does not come within the functions of the Grand Council of European States to interfere in disputes between one of its own members and a nation lying outside it. But, as between its own members, it holds, happily, far too high a sense of its duties to allow even the mighty Jewish influence to interfere with its strict impartiality. It is only when a clear case of wilful and outrageous wrong is made out, that it allows the resort to force, and the employment of the military forces of the Confederacy.

The moral sense of the rest of the world is thus an effective counterpoise to the tendency manifested by the capitalists of Palestine to make interest dominate over right. For a member of the Confederacy to make war upon a fellow-member without such permission, rightly entails a forfeiture of the protection of the Confederacy; and lays the offending member open to retribution, as an individual who, in a civilised country, takes the law into his own hands.

At the time of which I am writing, it was fortunate for at least one of the peoples neighbouring to the Jews, that they were both

under the jurisdiction of the Confederacy. For it needed such restraint to keep the ancient enmity of the Jews to the Egyptians from breaking out into fierce expression and violence. The Empire of Central Africa lay outside, and was equally hostile to Egypt, but its alliance with Palestine made it too strong to be molested by that country; while on its own part it was restrained by a wholesome dread of the Confederacy, from wantonly attacking one of its members.

Its peculiar geographical position, too, made it practically inaccessible, either by sea or land. Had it been a republic instead of a monarchy, it could have defied attack from all quarters whatsoever. But its political system was not adapted to the present state of the world. The advance of science has rendered the person of a sovereign too easily assailable for a monarchical régime to enjoy the same security as that of a republic.

When the public credit of a country depends upon the stability of its institutions, and those institutions are summed up in and represented by a single individual, it is clear that the invention of flying vessels, which

can at any moment swoop down with an armed squadron upon any spot of the earth, and carry off any individual, be he private citizen or emperor, must deprive the system of personal government of any element of permanence.

Even under the ancient "constitutional monarchies," the liability of the sovereign to seizure by death, rendered it necessary to postulate for him a fictional immortality, as was exemplified in the saying, "the king never dies." But liability to seizure by balloon is another matter. With their sovereign rapt away by an aerial force, and his whereabouts beyond their ken, it would be impossible for a people to determine whether the throne were vacant or not.

It is true that, to some extent, the evil provides its own remedy; for it is possible to employ an aerial guard to ward off or avenge aerial outrage. But experience has too fully manifested the danger of entrusting such a product of advanced science to a people civilised enough only to abuse the power it confers on them. Life in Central Africa was intolerable, until the Jews insisted on the de-

pendent Empire prohibiting the practice of aerialism within its limits ; and the Emperor faithfully and stringently carried out the injunction, forbidding even the white settlers to have recourse to it. The only exception was made in favour of transient post-couriers, who, as they could not be prevented from passing over the land, were permitted to call for mails. The bulk of the population resented the restriction, and it served to inflame the dislike they already bore to the Jews, for the hard terms of the money bargains they had made with them.

The long-smouldering dissatisfaction was brought to a crisis when the Emperor resolutely vetoed an act passed by his legislature for repudiating the public debt conditionally on the Jews refusing to lower the interest by one-half. The Emperor, though sympathising with his people, dared not do otherwise ; for not only was he a man of high integrity, and sagacity enough to know the ultimate costliness of a policy of repudiation ; but the known unflinching firmness of the Jews in avenging an injury to their interests, involved severe and inevitable punish-

ment. There were not wanting rumours of swift and secret vengeance inflicted by their aerial agents on their recalcitrant debtors. On this occasion, when it was found, on assaulting the royal palace in Bornou, that both the Emperor and the crown jewels had disappeared, the Jews were credited with having a hand in the work. It was not the first time that the jewels had disappeared, as we know by their being found in the balloon which descended on the iceberg at the birth of Christmas Carol. The unhappy Emperor himself has told us how that disappearance was effected. But even he was ignorant of the circumstances attending their descent into the volcano of Kilauea.

CHAPTER II.



ONCE again far away from the earth's teeming surface, and aloft in the familiar regions of the upper air.

Not this time bent on some enterprise of science, enjoyment, or humanity ; not to seek intercourse with the sublimated occupants of the spiritual world ; but solely to hold commune with his own inmost self, apart from all disturbing influences of circumstance and man, did Christmas Carol, possessor of manly youth, beauty, courage, skill, strength, knowledge, millions, and a soul, soar aloft to find in meditative abstraction the duty imposed upon him by his newly revealed endowments.

As he floated swiftly upon the eddying currents of that mid-winter season, unheeding

whither they bore him—so absorbed was he by his own thoughts—he found those thoughts taking shape and varying as never had they done before. Thus, at one moment he found himself assailed by visions of all sensuous delight, in which every ideal of excellence in nature and art seemed to be subordinated to the lower self, impelling him, in an access of voluptuousness, to cry, “Oh, Pleasure, I worship thee,” and to regard the world as a victim to be lawfully offered at the shrine of his own self-gratification.

Wondering whence these thoughts, so unfamiliar to him, proceeded, he chanced to glance at the magnetic register of his course, and found that he was poised over the historic land of all sensuous life; that land whose rulers had ever held that their country must be great, no matter at what expense of its neighbours; whose people had ever held that it was the function of all their rich endowments of wit and knowledge to minister to man’s lower and animal nature; that land in which the moral sense and pure intelligence had never raised their heads to protest against the national selfishness, but to lower them

speedily in agony and blood—the land of France!

Criss had learnt from his angel friends that there is a mysterious link between the sympathies of the upper and lower worlds; and the discovery of his position showed him that he must now be under the influence of the class of ideas which have their root in the Gallic soil and temperament, and enter perchance into the composition of the heavens above them, and tinge the souls of its spiritual occupants.

Impatiently rejecting the suggestions thus infused into his mind, Criss urged his car onwards, once more giving rein to his spontaneous thoughts. Finding a more robust sentiment animating him, and his patriotic emotions taking the place of all others, he glanced downwards, and found by the white gleam of the snowy mountain ridges beneath him, that he was passing over the land once of Tell, and now the gymnasium of nations.

Presently his reverie took a religious character, wherein he found himself plied with impulses to devote himself wholly to the cultivation of all that is beautiful in art and poetic

in sentiment, in conjunction with the symbolism of the ancient faiths, and so to build up an universal temple, into which, constrained by its beauty of rite and mystery of doctrine, all men should hasten to enter.

"Absorbed in me, Self will disappear," said the voice that now addressed him, "and with self will go the lower loves, the love of country and of knowledge, the love of woman and of offspring, and the MAN will appear in all his unimpeded might, and the world acknowledge a new Cæsar and Pontiff of religion and art."

Glancing once more at his index he perceived that he had drifted across the Alps, and was being assailed by the spirit of Italy; that spirit of insatiable dominion, which seeks ever to subordinate mankind to one overpowering régime, to the utter destruction of the individuality and higher development of man.

"And even," mused Criss, "were I to choose such a career, and become exalted over all others, even to being regarded as a divine founder or regenerator of such a system, unless mankind were the gainer

thereby, it would be as nought and worse than nought ; for though I win all to myself by virtue of the powers vested in me, nothing can convert the loss of others into my gain. Man I am and will be, and with man I must suffer or rejoice. ‘Consecrate my talents to God?’ Even that may be but another name for pride and self-seeking.

“So farewell, oh Rome ! who in time long past forced upon man *Law*, and made him pay dearly for it—even his all here ; and in time later forced upon him *Dogma*, and made him pay for it yet more dearly—even his all here and hereafter—pay with body and soul in time and eternity. Well indeed, doth the Laocoon, noblest of thy relic-marbles, represent Humanity struggling in thy once fatal toils !”

And now the blue mists of the Mediterranean and its border lands of sunshine began to disappear, as the moist south-west currents coming up from the restless Atlantic bore him towards the home of the north-east trade wind ; and his soul, still kept open to receive whatever influences might pour into it from

the surrounding world of spirit, found a new vision growing before it. This was a vision of times when men no longer suffered themselves to be ruled through the lower or more sensuous part of themselves, or suffered interest or love to dim their sense of justice and truth.

For now Criss's car had drifted over the great Teuton fatherland, where the air was inter-penetrated with pure and keen intellect, ever on the alert to know what was true, and holding nought as divine—contain what it might of beauty, use, or even of goodness—unless it put Truth first, and made all else subordinate to it.

This was so consonant to the ordinary tone of Criss's mind, that he was surprised at the elation he felt on coming into contact with this new sphere. But he presently learnt to ascribe it to the contrast which these fresh influences made with those of France and Italy which had so recently affected him. Not that he despised physical pleasure. He had too much happy animal health in him for that. Or failed to appreciate intensely all beauty in sentiment and art. He had too

much soul for that. But the spiritual airs which emanated from Germany, found a perfect response in his intellect, inasmuch as they encouraged him not only to place Truth first, but to reject as intrinsically hideous and pernicious whatever in life, in art, or in religion was not established upon a basis of pure science, at once verifiable and harmonious with itself. "Here," said Criss, "I strike the key-note of the modern civilisations."

And now, as in search of the fast-sinking wintry sun, he rose higher and higher, and was carried by the winds that came from the Steppes of Tartary once more over his own English home, influences of various kinds from far and wide, but already harmoniously blended together, seemed to gather round him. Viewed through their medium, the land of his adoption appeared to him as a vast digestive apparatus, receiving and assimilating all things that were cast into it, and by virtue of its sound constitution, converting all into good living substance. At the basis of the system of thought now presented to him, Criss found the clue to the character

and history of England—the courage to be free and to use her freedom, a courage founded upon faith in the divine harmony of the universe, and respect for the rights of every individual soul.

Contrasting the dominant idea of the Church of the Emancipation with that of the old mediæval sacerdotalism, he saw clearly that England owed all her success in extricating herself from the terrible dilemmas of the past, dilemmas social, political, and religious, to her sense of equal justice alike to persons and to periods. As no individual, however great and high, was suffered to dominate the rest ; so no age, however great its achievements, or sacred its traditions, was suffered to rule another age. England had gained much in advance on her past, before she could convert her National Church into an universal fane, beneath whose dome every mind developed by culture, could find free expression for its own perceptions of truth, and opportunity of submitting them to the general judgment.

Catching sight, as he glanced downwards, of the great city lying far below, and descry-

ing in the midst of its blaze of lights the dim outline of its cathedral, Criss found himself thus apostrophising the sacred edifice :—

“And thou, St. Paul’s, on whose lofty summit I have been wont to pause from my flights through the air, and alight, noblest, externally, of earth’s citadels of the soul, and, within, gem of England’s richest art,—thou, St. Paul’s, core of the throbbing heart of this great city, thine is the glory of symbolising the victory of this people over man’s worst, man’s sole enemy, his own fears of the imaginary, fears which banished God from the living world to the remote past, and delivered man over a prey to the terrors of superstition ; fears which magnified the spirit of evil until it took many gods to be a match for one devil ; fears now happily cast out by knowledge, and the trust that comes of knowledge.

“Beneath thy capacious dome, once restricted to a name and a sect, England’s sons can now meet, united in heart and method, no matter how diverse the conclusions of their intellect. Not until they found grace to withstand the wiles of priests who divided,

and creeds which confounded, and to regard the best human as the most divine—were they adjudged of Providence worthy to complete and crown thee their chiefest temple. Greater even than thy physical beauty is the moral beauty that now surrounds thee, St. Paul's, at length, after long ages, thus happily completed !”

Recalling the reproach anciently brought against England as a land of grumblers, Criss saw in the discontent once so prevalent; but the outcome of the general yearning towards a higher ideal of life and faith ; while in the slowness of the advance towards its realisation, he saw an illustration of the national patience.

This triune combination of endowments, Patience, Self-reliance, and a high Ideal, had he perceived in the recent centuries, though often in the dark, ever been working towards the end now happily attained ; until it has come that England still maintains her ancient prerogative of teaching the nations how to live ; of showing to the world that the Practical can be lawfully wedded to the Ideal ; Work to Faith ; Science to Reverence ; and

that the most fatal of errors consists in the attempt to divorce them, or to deny them the fruition of their proper affinity.

And as he thought of what such Spirit and such Work had done for the world and for England, and what a power of work was, as Avenil had said, stored up in the wealth wherewith his own hands were filled, he felt his spirit going out in eager aspiration for some worthy end to which he might devote himself, an end which would involve the redemption of at least a portion of earth, or of earth's children, from some inherited curse.

As thus, under the influence of English airs and feelings, he soared in thought towards the noblest aims, so, as if by conscious sympathy, his car rose higher and higher in the Empyrean, and his thoughts uttered themselves, in poetic rhythm : or, were they indeed voices that he heard around him, as of an invisible chorus, accompanying with angelic gratulations his high-born resolves ? Criss would not gather up his analytic faculties to inquire ; but left his mind open for the ideas to enter freely without effort on his part, and without seeking for their source.

Afterwards, he might, if his memory retained them, commit them to writing; but at the time itself, it was his wont to do nought to break the spontaneity of their flow. Having ever aimed at keeping his mind in tune with the holiest and the best, what need of further effort to make it produce sweet music? Or what else was needed to win the angels into sweet converse? Nay, had he not even but now been rejecting all promptings of the lower parts of his own nature, all temptation to use for his own gratification the manifold resources of earth's various provinces so freely put at his disposal, and finally resolved to bring his own inmost into consonance with the greatest good to others? What wonder, then, if in the access of his ecstasy it should seem to him as if the angelic dwellers in those rare and sublime spheres came and ministered to him?

If Criss had doubts, they were soon resolved, for soon the invisible chorus became visible, and his old friends from the ethereal spheres flocked around him. And foremost among them was the tall angel, now no longer alone, but with his wedded sunshine

clasping his arm, and ready to listen with bright and arch intelligence to her beloved's utterances as he opened to Criss some of the mysteries of the perfect life.

"If by Conventionality you mean the worship of the outermost," he said in reply to Criss, "we have none such among us; at least, in these higher spheres, in which I and mine dwell. For with us, all possess a law of their own inmost, to which alone allegiance is due. We reverence Matter, as that of which we and all things are composed. We reverence sensation and perception, which are faculties common to all. But we adore our own inmost, for that is to each the manifestation of the divine personality.

"Yes, we are affected by the course of events below. We do not understand how it comes about, but, somehow, good done or thought on earth radiates or vibrates sympathetically to us, and draws us nearer to the scene of it; while we recede from wilfulness and evil.

"It is a mistake to suppose that anything can subsist without a physical basis. Whatever exists is something, unless it be a mere effect. And whatever is something is mate-

rial and actual. The spiritual is but an effect or operation of the material, even as the emotional is : the diviner effect of an entity already divine. For matter is divine in its origin and infinite capacity for development, involutinal as well as evolutional. Differences are in degree, not in kind. There is no real without an ideal ; no ideal without a real. The most sublimated among us owns kindred with the grossest elements of earth, for we have a common basis. Herein, doubtless, consists the secret of our mutual sympathy.

“The Supreme? Ah, who can tell! Even could you penetrate the abysses of yon flaming orb, and drag his secret forth, you would be no nearer to learning what the Supreme is. Yet by way of illustration the sun can help us somewhat. Once upon a time the sun filled with his physical, bodily presence, all the space over which our system now extends, and yet more, uniformly diffused, and homogeneous in constitution. It was the all, and in all, and no other personality or entity existed therein ; for it contained in nebulous potentiality all that you and we are or can be, in body and soul.

"The illustration I perceive in your thought is a fair one, and this shining cloud may be likened to the *spat* discharged by the oyster in clear water. Though to all appearance but a cloud, it contains the germs of the whole future brood. Artificial appliances enable you to magnify and discern the young creature existing in perfection, though so minute. But scarce any appliance short of infinite perception can detect the capacity for future development lying hid in the nebulous cloud of space.

"Well, this cloud contracting and changing, gradually withdrew its actual presence from the outermost portions of the vast arena, depositing as it did so, the materials for those other individualities which we now behold as Worlds. But, though withdrawing itself in one sense, its influences of power and attraction, of heat and light, still permeate and govern them all as beings distinct, yet dependent; beings not made, not begotten, but proceeding. In it and of it, they live, and move, and subsist; and the intelligences upon them, constituting their flower and fruit, best fulfil the intention of their being when they

acknowledge their oneness with the rest of the Universe, and strive to fulfil to the utmost the laws which provide for their well-being and happiness.

“ You are perplexed, and know not whether it is of the sun, or of the Supreme, that I speak. The Supreme is the Infinite, beyond force, beyond mind, beyond being, beyond doing, beyond language, beyond ideas ; while the sun, though a complete individual in itself, is but one of many ; one member of a great family, a part and not the whole. Remember that whatever there is in you, or in us, now, in our present state, that, in some form or other, was in the original nebula out of which we are formed, that nebula being but a portion of the infinite, detached from the parent mass, and provided with the capacity necessary to enable it to evolve a perfect individuality of its own. Call it sun, or call it Supreme, you must believe that whatever exists consists of something, or you make God a negation. Matter is not contemptible. It is as the root to the flower ; and the flower of matter is the soul. Matter, therefore, is the basis of spirit. It is the basis also of duty.

On yonder earth, to which you belong, lies your highest, your sole, duty in the present."

Here Criss suddenly found himself alone, but in the presence of a smile that seemed to beam upon him and warm him to the heart ; a smile as from an unseen face ; until, as he descended towards the earth, it clothed itself in features which at first he took for those of his tall angel friend's angel bride, and then for those of the fair girl he had left shedding passionate tears on the slopes of Atlantika.

On approaching the surface of the earth and examining the configuration of the land, he found that the currents had wafted him near to the ranges of the Lebanon. At this he was greatly excited. Lebanon ! Palestine ! Jerusalem ! the home of his own race ! Away then, quick, to the city of his ancestors : the cradle of all the mid-time religions !

"Ancestors ! Parents !" thought Criss. "Ah, me ; why is it that I have no near kindred to call beloved, to please and to be proud of ? Ah, if I could only find some, however poor and destitute, to share—nay,

to claim—all this wealth, which to me is but a burden ; for if such live, surely it is theirs rather than mine. Oh, if my father still exists—no other parent can—what joy to find him and tell him that a portion, at least, of her he loved, still survives. I wonder why I have never before yearned towards an earthly parent ; least of all towards an earthly father. Of a possible mother I have sometimes thought with longing, but never of a father, save of the supreme Father of all. Can it be that the very absence of the tender relations of humanity has served to throw me more into the arms of an ideal and spiritual father ; or that in kindness I have been compensated for the loss ? It has not been unknown before that one deprived of sweet parental reciprocities, has been caught up, as it were, in spirit, and made one with the divine soul of all ; driven by the absence of the longed-for real, with sweet compulsion to the ideal. I am sure that my father must have been noble of spirit. At least, I will endeavour so to live, that, be he noble as he might, I shall not be unworthy of him. Now to descend into Jerusalem.”

CHAPTER III.

N a city of the importance and extent of Jerusalem, an arrival, whether by land or air, attracted no attention. Alighting in the courtyard of what he perceived to be one of the principal hotels, the *Royal Arab*, which he selected on reading its sign from aloft, as likely by its name to be frequented by Central Africans, Criss was presently installed in quarters deemed sufficiently luxurious for a young man travelling alone in an aeromotive. He dined by himself in the public salon, and during his meal read the day's papers. These, he found, were much taken up with the revolution in Bornou, and expressed fears that it seemed likely to extend through Soudan, even to Abyssinia,

hitherto reckoned an invincibly conservative part of the Empire, on account of its being the primary source and foundation of the Imperial family and system.

But what most excited his interest, was the account of an interview which had taken place on the previous evening between the fugitive prince and the Soudan bondholders' committee, in which much bitterness had been expressed on both sides towards the intervening State of Egypt, as the secret fosterer of the insurrection. The Jewish journals, too, one and all, seemed to have jumped at an opportunity for exhibiting the bitterness still remaining from the ancient feud between Israel and Egypt. As the press of Jerusalem was known to be devoted to the interests of the capitalists, it was easy for those who were familiar with local politics, to guess that some special and definite purpose lay behind this new outburst of animosity. What that purpose might be, Criss knew not, but he knew that the allied states of Palestine and Soudan were restrained from joining in an attack upon Egypt only by the fact that Egypt was a member of the

European confederacy, and in the opinion of the grand council had committed no fault worthy to justify an appeal to arms. Egypt might be a bad neighbour, but the law cannot be invoked to transform such into good neighbours, in national, any more than in individual life. A similar difficulty arose many years ago, on the abolition of duelling among private persons. Ill-conditioned people ventured upon conduct from which they had previously been restrained by fear of the consequences. Egypt knew that she could not be called to account for mere churlishness. For the law to interfere, she must behave very much worse than she had yet done.

Finding himself in the same city with the Crown Prince of Abyssinia—for such was the title of the heir to the throne—Criss became desirous of making his acquaintance, but without revealing himself. He perceived that his accidental connection with the late Emperor, and possession of the sacred gems, to say nothing of the mysterious link apparently existing between their families, placed him in a position to exert considerable influ-

ence ; but he felt that to be able to use that influence for good, he must retain his secret until some supreme and fitting crisis for its revelation.

He was thus in some difficulty ; for he could not seek a formal introduction without giving a sufficient reason ; and to give as a reason his meeting with the prince's father, would be to expose himself to questionings respecting the property the Emperor had carried off in his flight, and committed to Criss's care, as already related. Moreover, Criss was ignorant whether the knowledge the Emperor had shown of his name, as owner of the diamonds, was shared by the prince, or any of the Jewish upholders of his crown.

This last consideration led him to suppress his given name of Christmas, and enter himself in the hotel book simply as Mr. Carol, of London. He would learn the character and prospects of the prince before committing himself in any way to him. But how, then, was he to obtain the desired introduction ?

After much cogitation, he bethought himself of his friends at Atlantika, Nannie and

her relatives, the Hazeltines ; and he decided that he would approach the prince for the purpose of learning his opinion respecting the possible danger to them through the known hostility of the insurgents. However, it was reserved for accident to do what he required without his putting himself forward in any way.

Criss had not ordered any coffee after his dinner ; nevertheless, the waiter brought him some. Immersed in his reflections, Criss did not perceive that he had got what he had not ordered, until the waiter came and with many apologies took it away again, saying he had brought it by mistake : it was ordered by the other gentleman.

Taking no notice of the incident, Criss continued to reflect, until recalled by some conversation at a neighbouring table, the only one besides his own now occupied, for the rest of the diners had gone out to smoke in the verandah.

"I should like to see the gentleman the man took for me and gave my coffee to," said the occupant of the other table in a tone of

more asperity, it struck Criss, than the circumstance warranted ; a tone, apparently, of one not accustomed to be crossed.

“ He sits yonder, your highness,” replied the master of the house, who had come in person to explain the waiter’s mistake, while the attendants remained standing in a group near the entrance to the salon, evidently, now that Criss had looked up to see what was going on, curiously examining the two visitors.

The stranger looked towards Criss, and their eyes met in a steady scrutinising gaze.

Presently the other said, manifestly with the design of being overheard,—

“ Have you apologised to that gentleman for your mistake? No? Then I will do so.”

And getting up he approached Criss with an air of mingled dignity and deference.

“ The servants, in excuse for the blunder they have made about our coffee, plead a resemblance between us, which they declare to be extraordinary. But perhaps my Arabic speech is lost upon you ?”

Criss rose as the stranger addressed him.

The two young men fastened their eyes intently upon each other. The group of attendants involuntarily drew near. The resemblance in face, figure, and voice, was so extraordinary as to strike both the bystanders and the young men themselves. Criss, however, thanks to the Greek infusion in his blood, was of a fairer complexion, and a more refined and spiritual expression. Both were dressed in the prevailing costume of Europe.

"No apology is necessary," answered Criss, in the same language, "unless it be for the liberty I have taken in bearing any likeness to you. But pray do not remain standing. I am a stranger, a traveller just arrived, and shall be happy to take some coffee in your company."

"A stranger? a traveller? and from where may I ask?" said the other with curious eagerness, taking the proffered seat at Criss's table.

"From England, my home. But I presume, by your addressing me in Arabic, that I am not speaking to one of my own country?"

"No, but to one who admires and respects your country," said the stranger. "I am an Abyssinian by descent, and, like yourself, a stranger and a traveller, having lately left my own land in consequence of the troubles there. You, probably, feel little interest in them. It seems strange, though, that two persons of such different origin should be sufficiently alike to be mistaken for each other."

Criss remarked that he believed he had some oriental and southern blood in him, which might account for the likeness; and added that he took a great interest in Central African politics, and that not merely because he had friends settled there, for whose safety he was concerned, but because he had himself seen a little of the country, and conceived a respect for the character of its royal family.

"By your general look and mode of speech, I should certainly have taken you for one of my own people," returned the other, in terms which Criss recognised as almost identical with those which the late Emperor had used to him.

The stranger went on to ask him about his

calling or station, and Criss expressed himself as being often amused at being taken for a courier, as his fancy for aerial yachting—a taste not uncommon among English gentlemen—caused to be the case; and added that the last occasion on which this occurred was in passing over Bornou during the outbreak of the insurrection, when he had given cause for the supposition by stopping over the post office and letting down a line for mails.

“And since that, where have you been?”

“With my friends in England,” said Criss; “but I ought to introduce myself in form. I am an Englishman, on an aerial cruise. My home is London; my name Carol.” And Criss coloured a little, conscious that the unwonted candour of his advances was contrived in order to get the other to declare himself.

“I, too, am a traveller and a gentleman,” said the stranger, “and I have already said that I belong to Soudan, and am here through family and political misfortunes. Excuse me for saying,” he continued with a slight smile, “that you appear to me to be one who has never experienced a sense of misfortune.

But I should not therefore judge you as incapable of sympathy."

"Misfortune of my own," returned Criss, with emphasis, "I have never known. Misfortune of others it is my greatest happiness to sympathise with, and, if possible, alleviate."

"You, probably, have never lost parent, place, or fortune. I have lost all three. At least, I fear the worst for the first."

"Do you mind telling me all?" said Criss, already prepossessed in the stranger's favour, and divining that the other was only desirous to be certain that his confidence would not be abused. "Fortune and place are not irrecoverable at your—at our age; but a parent—a father—ah! that is a blessing I have never known. But you speak of his fate as if still in suspense."

"I am already known to too many in Jerusalem," said the stranger, "for it to be a secret much longer, and I am predisposed to give you my full confidence. It is rare to meet an English gentleman who has visited my capital. If my father be living, I am Crown Prince of Abyssinia; if he be dead, I

am, nominally at least, Emperor of Soudan and Abyssinia."

At this Criss rose, and respectfully taking the hand of the stranger, was about to touch it with his lips ; but the prince withdrew it, saying,

"Nay, such homage is with us reserved for the Emperor himself. I hope, though almost against hope, that he still lives."

Regaining possession of his hand, Criss kissed it solemnly, saying,

"Emperor of Soudan and Abyssinia, I proffer the homage that is your due. Your father, the late Emperor, is no more !"

"You speak positively ! How can you know this ?"

"The Emperor escaped, wounded and alone, in a flying machine. Crossing the Sahara to Algiers, he committed himself to the care of the British Minister there. The Minister and his physician did their best to save him. He died of his wounds two days before Christmas. I was there when he arrived, and knew the fact. I knew who he was, for he gave me his confidence as I tended him. The Minister will certify it to

you whenever you afford him the opportunity."

"Alone—wounded! My poor father! Were you present when he died?"

"No; immensely to my regret, I was compelled to be in England on that very day. But I was with him until the latest possible moment, and at his request had promised to return the instant I was free. I seemed to have won his confidence. He remarked my resemblance to his family. But I never saw him again. The Minister sent to inform me of his death."

"It is scarcely credible that he should have guided himself so far in safety, even had he not been wounded. But your account of his escape tallies with the fact that he was last seen entering the tower where the crown jewels are kept, for I know that there was an old flying machine in a chamber at the top, kept there as a curiosity, I supposed. But now it seems as if he had a purpose in keeping it there. Yet I never was led to think he anticipated revolution. How strange is this accidental meeting with one able to give such information!"

"As strange," said Criss, "as the coincidence of my lighting upon this particular country and city, and entering this particular hotel, at the moment of your being here. Yet all these coincidences would have led to nothing but for the servant's mistake about the coffee."

"And that, again," remarked the prince, "would not have occurred but for the likeness between us. But in what way, may I ask, is your arrival here accidental? Did you not mean to come to Jerusalem?"

Then Criss told him of his love for aerial navigation, and how that, being free from the necessity of working for his living, he spent much time in travelling. That on this particular occasion, having recently come of age, he had ascended in his car, in order to meditate on the best way of disposing of his life so as to be most useful in the world; and that, after being many hours at a great height in the air, carried about at will by the currents, he found, on returning to the earth that he was close to Jerusalem, and having, as he believed, some Jewish blood in him, he resolved to visit the ancient capital of his race.

The prince took a lively interest in his recital, and said he envied him the liberty he turned to such good account. "But what," he asked, "is the resolve to which you came?"

"Nothing very definite, I fear," said Criss, "beyond a resolution to do my best."

"What blood have you in you besides Jewish?" asked the prince, somewhat abruptly.

"Mostly Greek, I believe," was the answer.

"No Egyptian, or anything to lead you to sympathise with Egypt?"

"None whatever. Next to the land of my home, my sympathies are all with the two races I have named."

"I am glad to think there is no barrier to your serving me. I consider I have a claim, since you served my father."

"I will serve you with my whole heart," said Criss, "provided I serve mankind by doing so."

"I recognise the propriety of the reservation. It proves your English training. I have no vocation to be a tyrant; at least, I think not. But those Egyptians ought to be

punished. They are the cause of my troubles now, as they have been of all my country's troubles for the last five or six thousand years."

And, started on the topic which constituted a deep sore in his mind, he rapidly recounted the wrongs done to Abyssinia by Egypt, the catalogue of which he declared to be treasured up in the memories of all good and educated Abyssinians. And thus, talking far into the night, he told Criss how, in times long gone by, the mountain strongholds of his country had been a refuge for the kings of Egypt when driven out of their own land by the Bedouin Hyksos; and how the shepherd kings in their turn had been driven out when, refreshed and regenerated in their highland retreat, the successors of the refugee Pharaohs had descended with an army into Egypt, and recovered the land from the Arab invaders. How that these kings, again, had sought universal dominion, and overrun the world, from the Indus to the Niger; in their ingratitude enslaving Soudan itself, which had proved so good a friend to them in their adversity. And how Soudan, rebel-

ling, at length forced Egypt to acknowledge its independence. Then he told him how, reinforced by the Greeks, Egypt, under Psammiticus, had once more forced its way even to the Nubian Meroe, when it was compelled to give up the contest, and retire to its own limits.

“Its own, do I say?” he exclaimed with vivacity. “Egypt has nothing of its own; not even the soil of its land. Were it not for the sediment which the Blue Nile has for myriads of ages been carrying down from our mountains, Egypt would have no geographical existence. It would be but a patch of the sandy desert. It is to the Nile that flows, clear and bright, from the great lakes far to the south, and to the Nile that we yearly load with rich earth, that this ungrateful land owes all it ever possessed, even to its own existence. And now it refuses us a transit for our goods through its canal, except at an exorbitant cost, and will not let us construct a second one. It refuses us leave to make a railway through its worthless plains, but forces us to carry our produce by ferry across the Red Sea, and transport it by rail-

way through Arabia to the Persian Gulf, before it can reach the Mediterranean ; for even this is cheaper than the transit through Egypt. Then, by means of its agents, it fosters seditions and revolution in our country. The Jews, too, hate it, even more, if possible, than we do. From the days when their ancestors were enslaved by it, and the days when it cut down the forests of Lebanon to build the navy wherewith to conquer India and the Mediterranean, to the days when the independence and prosperity of Judæa are assured in spite of its utmost exertions, the Jews hate it, even as the people of Islam ever hated the Jews. Why, Egypt levies high toll upon every item of the wealth that pours through it into Europe, from the rich provinces of Madagascar and Eastern Africa, or to them from Europe. Believe me, nothing but the fear of the Confederacy of Nations has kept us from destroying Egypt by force of arms.

“ Oh, if ever I am restored to power I shall take care that it be not again endangered by this ungrateful people ! The Nile is ours. Every drop of its water, every grain of its

fertilising sediment, comes to them from us ;
for they have no single stream of their own—
no soil but barren sand. Let them beware !
Vengeance will not tarry for ever !”

CHAPTER IV.

HE first portion of that night, after parting from his new friend, was passed by Criss in that anxious meditation which possesses so much in common with earnest prayer ; the latter part, in the quiet sleep which was habitual to him. But it was only when his mind had attained the goal of resolve that his body sank into the repose of sleep. Could it be that in this young and uncrowned Emperor he had found his mission, and perhaps his relative, sole upon earth ? The thought brought no joy to him, save in so far as it indicated a duty to be fulfilled, and a subject worthy of affection. What did trouble Criss was the frame of mind which misfortune seemed to have evoked in the prince. He

could not conceive of himself as breathing out threatenings and slaughter against any individual, under any circumstances. Much less could he comprehend the mood that personified a whole people, and sought to inflict vengeance upon them as upon a personal foe. Surely, if no other duty presented itself to him, to mitigate the imperial ferocity was a duty worthy of all his solicitude. Criss felt that he was not altogether powerless to promote his restoration. Could the prince by such agency be restored to his throne a better man, nations would be the better for Criss having lived.

The morning's telegraphic intelligence from the revolted capital, gave a new direction to Criss's thoughts. The insurgent government was determined to punish the foreign settlers for their sympathy with the late dynasty, and coldness towards the new régime ; and an expedition was to start at once for the wealthy settlements of the whites in the mountains. Atlantika, as the leading district, was to be the first to suffer.

Criss's eyes became dimmed as he beheld

in imagination the fair regions he had so lately visited, ravaged by war, their smiling homesteads blackened by fire and stained with blood, and their happy, prosperous occupants—Ah!—and here a pang shot through him as he thought of Nannie, the passionate wayward Nannie: she of the sunny smile and April eyes, who resembled the fairest angel of his sweetest visions,—Nannie in danger, perchance a fugitive, alone and foodless, amid rough mountains and horrid infested woods, her wealth of golden hair streaming behind her as on bleeding feet she fled from barbarous negro ravishers, and seeing no salvation on earth, gazing with wild looks into heaven as if thence only, even as once before, a deliverer might come. And shall she look in vain? No! thundered the heart of Criss, as, starting from the trance in which he seemed to have seen all these things as vividly as with his bodily eyes, he rose and hastened to prepare for an immediate start to Soudan.

His preparations consisted in paying his hotel bill, and despatching a telegram to Avenil, begging him to back with promptest

endeavour any movement of the Council of Confederated Nations for saving the European settlers in Central Africa from the destruction with which they were menaced by the insurgents of Bornou, whither he was now proceeding. On leaving the writing-room after despatching his message, he found himself running against his acquaintance of the previous evening, of whose existence he had for the moment become oblivious.

"Forgotten me already?" said the prince. "You look as absorbed in your thoughts as if you too had a kingdom to recover."

"Your highness will pardon me," returned Criss. "The news from Bornou is bad for my countrymen. I am starting for the hills, to see if I can aid my friends. I have little doubt of being able to return in a few days,—probably three or four,—and then I shall be at your highness's service, for any good that we can do together." And Criss put a marked emphasis on the word *good*.

The prince gazed on him with a strange and almost troubled look, but did not immediately speak. As Criss divined, his thoughts were apologetic, for presently he said,—

"Ah, that good, cool England has given you the discipline that is very difficult of acquirement in our ardent Soudan. I think that I must have an English counsellor,—that is, when I am restored. But how long will it take you to get there? and what do you expect to do alone? I shall be very sorry to lose you again so soon. I could wish you to remain by me, for I feel strangely drawn towards you. Do you know what will constitute your chief danger if taken by the rebels?"

Criss shook his head.

"Your resemblance to me. I see it more strongly to-day even than last night. But you are the handsomer of the two. That Greek dash has done you a good turn. And I suspect you are the better of the two. You have been *improved*. I claim only to be improvable."

"Show yourself so, and I shall love you and serve you truly," said Criss, his eyes beaming on the prince with an ineffable tenderness. "Show yourself so, and you will have no cause to regret your present misfortunes, be they temporary or not."

"You speak to me as equal to equal. Pray does every Englishman hold himself a king?"

"Many are more than kings, for they are superior to all dictation, save that of their own consciences. Is there aught of commission that your royal highness desires to entrust to me?"

"My friends are organising a force to support me," returned the prince. "The only question is whether I ought to return and place myself at their head. They advise delay until they are stronger. I wish to do what is best for the country and the dynasty. This very day I hold a conference with the bondholders' committee on the subject. Otherwise I should be inclined to beg a passage with you. Could you take me in your car?"

Criss was startled by the singularity of the coincidence, by which the son sought to return in the same conveyance which had aided the father's flight. But he only said,—

"Best wait my return. I will tell you exactly how affairs stand. For the present, farewell."

The prince insisted on seeing him off. On

beholding the Ariel, he exclaimed warmly in praise of its exquisite combination of diminutiveness, strength and elegance.

"Surely it is unsurpassed," he said.

"It is unequalled," replied Criss; and was about to start, when the prince said,—

"Have you any arms?"

"None; only instruments and tools to meet various emergencies. I hate the idea of personal violence, and cannot imagine myself having recourse to it under any circumstances, not even in self-defence."

"That is because you have always lived in civilised and peaceful lands. Now you are going into barbarism and danger. People who behave as wild beasts must be treated as such. But whether as a weapon, or as a remembrance of me, pray accept and wear this pistol, at least until we meet again. If not for yourself, you may need it for others."

The last remark decided Criss, and buckling round him the weapon, which was an explosive multiplier of the finest make and utmost potency, he entered his car. As he was quitting the ground, a thought struck him, and he said to the prince,—

"Should it be needful for you to return, and I be prevented from coming for you, will you entrust yourself to the agent I purpose to employ?"

"I will trust you and your agent implicitly," said the prince. "Only let me know the situation, before I decide upon returning. The bondholders here have a claim to influence my movements."

Mounted aloft, Criss referred to his chart, his compass, and his chronometer.

"Nearly thirty degrees south-west, and now nine a.m. At the rate of two degrees an hour, I shall not reach Yolo until midnight. There is no twilight there, and I must arrive before dark, if possible. Now to see the direction and probable force of the winds." And he consulted his chart of atmospheric currents.

To his great satisfaction he found that by flying at a certain elevation, he would have the aid of a north-east current, which at that season of the year blew steadily and strongly.

Referring to his barometer, he ascended to the requisite height, where, putting on a high

speed, he travelled in his course for an hour. He then took observations to ascertain the distance he had covered. The movements of the air at such altitudes are not to be judged by the corresponding movements called *winds* below. Beyond the reach of retardation by friction with the earth's surface, the great currents aloft sweep along unimpeded at rates which here would make hurricane and disaster.

"Four degrees in the hour," said Criss, joyously. "Oh, current, only hold thus, and before sundown the goal will be in sight."

CHAPTER V.



ON the eve of the day which saw Criss hasting with all speed to the succour of his friends, were held two councils of war. One in the Bornou capital by the leaders of the insurrection. The other by fugitive planters from the white settlements, high up on the slopes of Atlantika, where, in a natural fortress of rocks, camp fires were kept burning to scare off wild beasts, and temper the keen mountain air for the women and children who crowded, scared, around them. Now that the trial was come, the young women who had been so eager to add military practice to their other accomplishments, found their hearts fail them, and this so utterly that they quite forgot to resent the cool matter-of-course way in

which the men left them entirely out of their calculations in the measures they adopted for defence. Curiously enough, somehow, the men did not think the worse of the other sex for thus vindicating itself. For no reproaches passed between them on the subject.

It was known in the mountain that the insurgent forces might be expected at any hour. Of a prolonged resistance the whites were hopeless. They relied mainly upon the material aid, or threats equally efficacious, of the Council of Confederate Nations, to which they had despatched an urgent appeal by telegraph. The Council not being in session, it had to be specially summoned. This had caused delay. When met, it acted with the utmost promptitude and energy; for it despatched a powerful aerial squadron to Bornou, with instructions to rescue or avenge the settlers, and destroy the capital unless the leaders of the revolution guaranteed the liberty, lives, and property of the entire foreign population of the country. With internal politics it was not to meddle.

On the mountain, the consultation was about the appeal and the chances of its

having reached its destination; and also of their ability to hold out until the arrival of succour.

In the capital, the consultation was between the leaders of the revolt, who already were divided among themselves on two important points; one, the policy of incurring the hostility of Europe by ill-treating the whites; the other, the advisability of declaring the young prince Emperor, in the event of his complying with certain conditions; and this whether his father were dead or not.

Criss had crossed the Libyan desert when he became sensible of a great diminution of his speed. He judged rightly that the heat of the Sahara had, by creating a current on its own surface, deflected or reversed the current with which he had been travelling.

He could not now reach the point at which he aimed before nightfall; and he was doubtful whether he could find that point in the dark. Descending towards the earth in search of the favourable winds which had failed him aloft, and which were likely to be prevalent on the Sahara, it occurred to him that it

might be possible to hold communication with his friends in the settlement, and ascertain before-hand their precise situation. The vast development of the telegraphic system rendered it impossible that the insurgents should have cut all the wires, even if they had wished to do so, and there might be at hand means of communicating direct with the plantation, without risk of interception in the capital. He remembered that the central office of the hill district was close to the Elephant farm, and under the supervision of Nannie's brother-in-law ; and his telegraph-guide informed him that Atlantika, being the highest mountain of the range, was provided with the usual convenience for aeronauts.

The sun was getting low when the desert blasts became sufficiently lulled for the mist of sand to abate, and the atmosphere clear enough for him to scan the ground as he skimmed along near the surface. Soon he caught sight of a large white building, which he recognised as the place of a well. It was scarcely doubtful that it would contain also a telegraph station, for in that thirsty land a well is the only possible halting place. The

presence of travellers, however, might make it unsafe for him to descend and communicate.

Examining with his glasses the inscription on the roof of the building, so placed in immense letters for the benefit of aeronauts, Criss was pleased to find that he had not deviated in any wise from his direct course, and that the well was in a locality whose inhabitants owed much to the late Emperor : for it was the well of *Kebir*, in the country of the *Tebu*. But he had still two-fifths of his journey to accomplish.

A large caravan was halting at the well, such being even then the usual method of locomotion between the provinces of *Fezzan* and *Darfur*. Halting at some height, Criss perceived that the caravan was waiting for the night, to pursue its toilsome way. Camels, disburdened of their loads, lay about with their noses resting on the bales of goods, and beside them, in the shadow of their huge bodies, reposed the drivers. Evidently it was but a caravan of merchandise, and therefore peacefully disposed.

Approaching close enough to parley, Criss

learnt that a very large party even among the insurgents were believed to be favourable to a restoration ; and in return for this news he told them that the Emperor was dead, and the young prince at Jerusalem holding himself in readiness to return and head his party.

In answer to his enquiries respecting the telegraphs, they, after an examination of the wire-labels, told him that he could telegraph direct to the plantation station below Atlantika, and they offered to despatch any message Criss wished, if his journey was too urgent to allow him to come down and do it himself.

Criss said it was true that he was in great haste, but the message he had to send was in English, and therefore it was necessary for him to communicate it himself. Would they, therefore, be so good as to attach the wire he would let down, to the wire which communicated with the Atlantika station, as he had a battery in his car ?

This done, Criss sent two messages ; one for Hazeltine himself, and another for transmission to the Summit, in case the settlers had deemed it expedient to form an encampment on the mountain. Criss did not suppose the

settlement could be deserted altogether ; and even if no one were present when the message arrived, it would record itself, and be legible to the first comer. As for the Summit telegraphs, they are constructed to call attention by exploding a signal. In both messages Criss requested that a beacon might be fired on the top of the mountain towards midnight, when they might look out for him. But he received no acknowledgment in return.

CHAPTER VI.

BVEN amid the dangers of the insurrection, Nannie, with her wonted wilfulness, refused to regulate her conduct by that of the rest of the girls of the settlement. She laughed at their fears, refused to believe in the approach of any enemy, and declared that she would justify her nickname of Wildcat, by remaining in her home after everybody else had deserted it. The body of settlers were already on their march up the mountain when her absence was observed by some of the neighbours.

"Where's Nannie?" they asked of her brother-in-law.

"She prefers to stay at home, for once."

"But surely some one had better go back for her?"

"Not if you want her to come," was his response. "Nannie has a way of pleasing herself. Our best chance is to let her alone."

They appealed to her sister, who with looks the reverse of cheerful, was riding in a covered waggon with her children.

The only answer they got from her was,—

"Nannie knows what she is about. It is pleasanter there than here, and I dare say quite as safe."

The neighbours looked at each other significantly, and said no more. As Nannie's relations did not show concern, it was not for others to do so. So they held on their way, none of the young men venturing to volunteer on a quest of such doubtful acceptance. Besides, there was a general conviction that Nannie would follow them when she got tired of being by herself.

The night and the day passed without molestation, and the party had leisure to occupy and fortify a strong position high up on the mountain side, whence they could with their glasses descry the railroad from the capital, and any military demonstration that might approach from that quarter. Fortunately it

was not the season for rains ; and the fear of animals being less than the fear of the enemy, the camp fires were early extinguished.

So things went until towards midnight on the day after their arrival, and no Nannie had made an appearance. Then came an alarm. A bright glare lit up the mountain-top, yet a considerable distance above them, and, by reason of precipitous cliffs, inaccessible on that side. While they were wondering what the light could mean, screams were heard ; then a succession of shots ; and presently all was quiet, and the glare died away. Some of the party had fancied they had heard a shot or an explosion in the earlier part of the evening. Conjectures were active for a time, but no attack or demonstration followed, and the alarm was not renewed. Only Nannie's sister had, with blanched cheek, whispered to her husband,—

“ I am certain that was Nannie's voice.”

The alarm of the night was forgotten in the excitement of the morning, when train after train appeared moving up towards the station at the foot of the mountain, and bands

of soldiers disembarked from them, and formed into lines with the manifest purpose of ascending the slope. This was the signal for removing the women and children to a yet greater height, so that they might be out of the reach of injury by the expected assault. These had not been long up there, before they sent word down to say that they had discovered the cause of last night's alarm ; for they had found the telegraph station on the summit burnt down, and the bodies of three negroes killed either by lightning or by gun shots.

Strange to say, the enemy, instead of advancing, made a long halt in their ranks at the foot of the hill station. Then, breaking into groups, they appeared by their vehement gesticulations, to be engaged in hot controversy together. Presently, to the still greater astonishment of the settlers, they set to work deliberately to prepare a meal.

While the fugitives were marvelling what the delay and apparent change of purpose meant, an aeromotive hove in sight, coming straight from the capital towards the mountain. Their best glasses failed to make out

its character or occupants. Arrived directly over the insurgent camp, but considerably below the position held by the planters, the car stopped, and a conversation took place, which manifestly roused the interest of the troops to the utmost pitch. On its termination, the whole force broke into rounds of ringing cheers, and very explosions of shouts. The car then proceeded on its course, and approached the party on the mountain with the evident intention of joining it.

CHAPTER VII.



ANNIE did not herself comprehend the feeling which made her remain in the settlement when every one else fled from it ; but Nannie was one whose fancies were to her as inspirations, and who, when she had a fancy, felt that she must give way to it, or else go beside herself.

“ It must be so, because I think it.”

“ I know it is true, because I dreamt it.”

These were her usual formulæ. Talk to her of being reasonable, and her lovely mouth would curl with ineffable disdain, as she exclaimed,—

“ Reasonable ! a woman’s business is to feel, not reason.”

With this creed she was born, and in it she had grown up, refusing all culture of mind,

all discipline of habit ; yet in native quickness of perception so far surpassing all around her as often to justify the contempt she openly expressed for their inferiority and slowness.

“ Logs ! They are all logs compared to me,” she would exclaim when any other woman was mentioned as capable of doing anything whatever. And her bright eyes would flash, and her bright hair cristle, and every dainty limb quiver with excitement, as she asserted the thoroughness of her own womanhood, to the despite of every example that could be quoted in comparison with her.

Her outward resemblance to her sister was very great, but in character Nannie was the less self-considering of the two. Her sister was not incapable of being selfish by intention. Nannie was never selfish, except through the impetuous heedlessness which was apt to cause as much annoyance and distress to others as if she had intended to hurt them. All heart as she was, and was proud of knowing herself to be, she was not the less likely to be the cause of unhappiness to herself and those she loved, than if her

heart had been under the dominion of a head, and that head proportioned in a way to shock all phrenological proprieties.

After the evacuation of the settlement, Nannie roamed about prying into the neighbouring houses and gardens, fondling the deserted and wondering animals, and not hesitating to break a window and force an entry wherever she espied a cat or a bird gazing wistfully on the unwonted solitude. More than one tame elephant and other huge beast acknowledged her as their deliverer. Loading herself with provisions suited to their various tastes, she went through the avenues followed by a crowd of animals, whom she petted and teased by turns. Thus the time passed, until the second evening approached, and she began to tire of their sole companionship. So, finding herself back at her home, she took refuge in the telegraph office, a place she was always longing to explore, principally because her brother-in-law, dreading her reckless inquisitiveness, had strictly forbidden her to enter it.

Here at length, after committing various

antics with the instruments by way of experiment, being completely tired out, she fell fast asleep on a rocking-chair, close alongside the signal tell-tale, and was soon far away in the world of dreams, a world that with her possessed a reality even more vivid than the world of her waking hours.

Nannie had ever been a wild dreamer, and there was a perfect consistency between her dreaming and her waking characters; for, as when awake her fancies would ever insist on being transmuted into facts, so, when asleep her visions revealed themselves in movements and utterances. In short, she was addicted to talking and walking in her sleep; and this through no morbid affection or cerebral disturbance, but solely through her being so intensely alive in every atom of her composition, that it was scarcely possible for the whole of her to be asleep at once. She suggested the notion of one of those zoophytic creatures, each piece of which, on its being cut up, becomes a living and entire animal.

Since her adventure at sea and rescue by Criss, she had become conscious of some

change in her moods, both waking and sleeping. There were even moments when she felt her wildness vanish almost entirely away ; and she soon discovered that these unwonted accessions of docility were contemporaneous with her reminiscences of Criss. Sometimes her sister caught her still and thinking for a minute or two together, and on twitting her with her seriousness, Nannie would colour and exclaim,—

“ Oh, I daresay he is a log, like the rest. I hate logs.”

But who the *he* was, she did not reveal.

On the present occasion, Nannie was dreaming of her voyage through the air, and of the dark-skinned, bright-eyed young man who sat aloft in the rigging, leaving her the comfortable car all to herself, and patiently answered all her questions, and listened to her fitful discourse. Then she dreamt of herself crying wildly in the garden on his departure, and declaring that he must be a log, or he wouldn't have gone away at all ; and then of her rage with herself for seeming to care, when in reality she did not care a bit, and only cried,—she did not know why ;

she supposed the tears came of themselves ; she did not want them to come. And then, red and white with mingled emotions, she started from her sleep, crying out,—

“ Yes ! yes ! What is it ? I am coming ! Quick ! quick ! ”

For the magnetic alarum beside her was sounding its sharp appeal, in token that a message had just inscribed itself upon the recording tablet.

Nannie was soon wide enough awake to remember where she was, and to guess what had happened. Darting eagerly towards the tablet, she found herself gasping for breath as she saw Criss's name, and then read his message from the desert well.

“ Oh, those stupid, stupid people ; to all go away and leave no one to mind the messages,” she exclaimed. “ Criss, dear, good, stupid Criss, coming to help us, and he will go floundering about in the dark, looking for the mountain ; and there is no one to light the beacon, or send his message on to the summit station. How I wish I had learnt to use the thing. All the other girls here know it. Why did they let me grow up so

ignorant? I don't seem to have ever been taught anything."

And here she stopped in her tirade, and coloured violently, for she remembered that it was solely her own fault in always persistently refusing instruction.

Then seizing the wire which communicated with the summit, she applied the magnetic battery to it; but in trying to use the instrument, she puzzled in vain over the letters necessary to indicate the message. Then she cried with vexation, for she thought the settlers might already be on the top of the mountain, and it only needed that she should send on the message for them to fire the beacon for Criss's guidance. Her next thought was, that perhaps they would not go so high up, and that the message would be of no use, even if it got there, through the absence of some one to receive and act upon it.

This last reflection quite overcame her patience; and seizing the battery and the wires, she dashed them vehemently down, as stupid, useless creatures. Nannie did not know that though she could not transmit the

message, she had exploded the message-signal on the summit.

Then sinking into the chair in which she had lately been sleeping, she meditated.

"I'll do it myself," she cried, starting up with a determined air. "I'll outwit them yet!"

She had not employed precisely the phrase that expressed her meaning ; but it was natural to Nannie to inveigh against circumstances as if they were persons, and evilly disposed towards her.

Another hour saw Nannie, laden with matches and combustibles, resolutely trudging up the mountain, by a path with which she was well acquainted, but which lay at a distance from that taken by the fugitives. It was quite dark, and she knew it would take her two or three hours to reach the top ; but the thought of being useful to Criss sustained her, and she did not doubt of accomplishing her purpose by the time he had specified in his message. She was animated, too, by a sense of triumph over those who would have induced her to leave the settlement with

them, and of the now proved superiority of her instinct to their reason.

Much of the track by which she had to travel, was rough with sharp stones, and tangled with creeping plants—impediments she had never discovered in her daylight journeys—and Nannie, in her eagerness to get on her way, had neglected to provide herself with shoes fitted for such work. By the time she reached the summit station, her little feet were bleeding from many a cut, her clothes torn, and her body bruised with many a heavy tumble; but her big heart never faltered, or let her fears prompt her to turn back, or even to join the fugitives, whom she perceived to be encamped at no great distance on another part of the mountain.

The station was in a little wooden hut, known as the *chapel*, from having been built several generations back by the missionaries, who had been instrumental in converting that country from Islamism to Christianity, partly for devotional purposes, and partly to shelter persons caught in the storms, which at that

elevation are wont to be of tremendous violence. It was of dry pine, and highly inflammable, as Nanny happened to know through the fierceness with which it had burnt, and the difficulty with which it had been saved, when accidentally set on fire once by a pic-nic party, at which she had been present as a child.

A few yards from the hut was a ledge of stone, on which it was the wont of excursionists to make their fires for cooking, and it was on this ledge that Nannie prepared to make the beacon required by Criss.

Wanting light to enable her to see in order to collect fuel from the surrounding thickets, she commenced by making a small fire on the stone. To her great dismay, she found that, with all her searching and gathering, the utmost she could obtain was barely sufficient to keep this alive ; and her idea of a beacon very properly involved a blaze that could be seen far and wide.

After a little while, it surpassed her resources to maintain even this little fire. Rushing into the neighbouring thicket, she ignited match after match against any tree

that she thought might be dry enough to burn. But all was of no use, and at last, fairly beaten, she sat down by the smouldering embers on the stone, and began to cry. Depressed by disappointment, a sense of her desolation and loneliness now came vividly over her, and to her other woes added that of terror. That Criss might fail to carry out his design never occurred to her. She was entirely occupied with the idea of him hovering round in the dark, and feeling, as it were, for the summit whereon to alight.

But, hark! A sound! And her heart beat as she prepared to scream loudly in response to his signal. Ah! it is only the public clock of the settlement, far below and miles away, booming the hour.

Mechanically Nannie counted the strokes. "Twelve! Midnight! Why, he was to be here towards midnight! Oh, what shall I do! What shall I do!"

A thought strikes her. Another minute, and the thought has become a deed. And now, with a fierce roar, the flames of the burning chapel are darting high into the air, and lighting up mountain and sky with a bright and steady blaze, while Nannie is run-



ning and dancing around it, and laughing triumphantly, and clapping her little hands, as if to encourage it. Nannie was no historian, or she would have known that she was not the first of her sex to set fire to a church for the sake of her lover. And not only was she no historian, but she did not know that her feelings for Criss partook in any way of the character of love.

A voice, and a rush! "He comes! oh, he comes!"

And Nannie looked round in the direction of the sound.

Alas! no Criss, no lover; though needed more than ever as a deliverer now. Needed far more, even, than when on the brink of the burning ship she stood ready to plunge into the ocean. For the creatures that meet her gaze are hideous savages, grinning and glaring upon her, as half-mad with drink and brutal passion they advance, three in number, towards her, with outstretched arms and fiendish yells.

They are negroes, who have taken advantage of the disturbances to plunder, and retired to the mountain to carouse unmolested,

and who have been attracted to the summit by the unusual sight of the fire.

Shrieking loudly, Nannie darted from them, passing the burning hut so closely that the flames scorched her. Terror stricken and fleet of foot, she would probably have escaped, but the dense thicket brought her up, and she could not get away from the light of the fire.

They were closing in upon her, as she still flew and screamed, when, to their amazement they found themselves confronted by another whom they had not seen before, and who now darted between them and their prey, with imperious language and gestures, bidding them to forbear, on pain of instant destruction.

The wretches were too infuriated to heed the speaker. Two of them turned on him, while the other continued the pursuit of Nannie, now too exhausted to fly further. Extreme measures were absolutely necessary. What matter whether anthropoid apes, or pithecoïd men? Had it not lately been declared, and by one entitled to authority in that country, that those who behave like wild beasts

-to say nothing of their looking so much like them—must be treated as such ?

A couple of shots in rapid succession laid two of the assailants on the ground. In another moment, the third had shared their fate ; and Nannie, glancing round at the sound, recognised her deliverer, and, with a scream of joy, fell fainting on the ground.

CHAPTER VIII.

RISS ran towards the fallen figure of her whom he had a second time rescued ; but finding his efforts to restore her to consciousness vain, he hastened to his car, which he had left close at hand, and presently returning with a cordial was more successful in winning her back to life. When she opened her eyes, he addressed her in Arabic, and was surprised to receive only a vacant stare in return.

Supposing that she was still under the influence of her recent swoon, he proceeded to pour more of his reviving liquid on her brow and hands. But she impatiently repelled the attention, and said sharply,

“Why do you talk to me in a language I don’t understand? Are you not Mr. Carol?”

“Certainly, that is my name ; but——”

"But you don't know me," she interrupted, "and you thought it was some other girl you were saving?" And in the access of her momentary jealousy, she energetically repulsed him.

Then, softening,

"I did it all to please you," she exclaimed, and burst into tears.

"What! can it be Nannie!" he cried; "my pretty little friend Nannie! alone, up here, and in this plight!"

"Of course it is. Why, who else did you think it could be?"

And then, glancing at her hands and clothes, which were all torn and soiled, she said,

"Well, I do look like a beggar girl; but, oh! I am so sore all over, with my tumbles, and the thorns, and running away from those nasty negroes. I am sure I must have some dreadful wounds somewhere," and lifting her dress, she revealed some ugly cuts above the ankles, from which the blood was flowing. This alarmed her, and exclaiming,

"Oh, I can't bear the sight of blood," she swooned away again.

Criss was somewhat embarrassed. He could not leave her there and thus. And he was most anxious to set about fulfilling his mission. Besides, as a young man, and one who was not a doctor, he was naturally shy about investigating the bodily state of one of the other sex.

Nannie, however, gave him little leisure for indulging his embarrassment. Starting to her senses again, she cried,

"Why don't you stop the bleeding? Surely a man is not afraid of the sight of blood. Have you nothing that will do for a bandage? Here, wrap this round. It will do till something better can be got."

And she tore off some strips from her tattered skirt, and gave them to him.

Setting to work as directed, Criss did not fail to derive considerable relief from her manifest unconsciousness of the peculiarity of the situation, and was glad to accept her rebukes for his clumsiness in proof of that unconsciousness.

"I am so hungry," said Nannie, whimpering once more.

"That is soon remedied," replied Criss.

"But you must get into your old place in the Ariel's car, and then you can feed, and sleep too, as we go along."

"Why, where are you going to take me?"

"Well, you see, we are not the only people in the world to be thought of," he returned. "Now just tell me exactly how matters stand at the settlement?"

"Oh, such fun!" she cried, clapping her hands; "there's not a human creature there; and I have set all the doors and gates open, and let all the cats and dogs, and cows and poultry, and other tame beasts loose, to go where they like, and broken the telegraph things, and——"

He succeeded at length in learning from her the whole situation, so far as she knew it. He then told her that he had passed the troops on their way, and that he must at once return to the capital to see if he could do anything to arrest their progress.

"Then what are you going to do with me?"

"Under all circumstances," he returned, "I think it best to take you with me to the capital, and perhaps deposit you with a

doctor to be properly attended to while I am busy."

"You seem very anxious to get rid of me," she said, with a pout. "I hate doctors, and don't want to be left by myself in the city, with strangers. Besides, I am quite well now, or shall be when I have had something to eat."

"Well, get into the car at once," said Criss, "and we will settle the rest as we go along." And he helped her to get up, and move towards the Ariel ; but she was so stiff and exhausted that he had almost to carry her and lift her in.

The couple of hundred miles which separate the mountain from the city, were soon spanned ; but not before Nannie, who had eaten a hearty meal, was fast asleep. Criss had been amused to find that on catching sight of herself in a little mirror which was in the car, for the fire still burnt brightly, she insisted on washing her face and arranging her disordered hair before touching a particle of food. With a light wrapper of Criss's thrown over her head and shoulders, she really looked as charming once more, Criss thought, as it was

possible for any one to look, even under the most favourable circumstances.

Approaching the capital, Criss arrested his flight, intending to hover around it until the arrival of daylight should make it possible for him to hold communication with the authorities.

To his great satisfaction, his passenger continued to sleep soundly.

CHAPTER IX.



AVENIL knew that Criss would not have despatched such a message to him as that which he received from Jerusalem, had there not been good cause for urgency. Losing no time in communicating with the Confederate Council, he found that orders had already been issued, in answer to the appeal of the white settlers in Bornou, to despatch an aerial force to their aid. But, as Criss's message suggested to Avenil, the mischief might be done before that force could arrive. He therefore represented to the Council the propriety of telegraphing to the leaders of the revolution in the African capital, the strongest assurances of condign punishment should any harm befall the European population ; stating at the same

time that the message would be immediately followed by a force capable of utterly destroying the city by raining explosives and inextinguishable fire upon it.

Criss did not pause to hover around the capital as he had intended. For, although it was not yet light, he found the whole population on the alert, and the leaders in full conclave. Uncertain of their temper, he hesitated about alighting to seek a doctor for Nannie. Besides, her sound continued sleep assured him that, under the care of nature, she was doing well.

He had intended to plead with the insurgent chiefs the cause of the fugitive prince and the settlers, by assuring them of vast rewards if they would reinstate the former, and of the severest punishment if they injured the latter. And he was prepared to work upon the popular superstitiousness by announcing the safety of the sacred gems of the crown, and to offer himself as a guarantee that they and the prince should be forthcoming at a fitting time. But for the present he would defer seeking the necessary interview.

Finding the city awake and abroad as if it had been up and out all night, he contented himself in the first instance with descending low enough to catch the meaning of the cries and conversations which were going on in the streets. He could do this without himself being seen, as, though the city below was lighted, the air above was still dark. Yet he observed numberless faces constantly upturned towards the still darkened sky, as if in expectation of a visit from that region : but it was some time before he could string together the sentences he caught, so as to gather from them a connected meaning.

At length, when dawn was so near that he thought of retreating, he discovered the cause of the general anxiety. A message had arrived in the night from the Council of European Nations, declaring in the most positive terms that the city should be razed to the ground, and utter destruction dealt on the people, if any injury was done to a single European in the country ; and that an aerial expedition was already on its way, with strict instructions and ample means relentlessly to execute the vengeance denounced.

This was such a practical method of dealing, that Criss was strongly disposed to see Avenil's hand in it, and he congratulated himself on his forethought in telegraphing to him from Jerusalem.

Having thus obtained a key, he soon succeeded in unlocking the mystery. The news of the threatened vengeance had got abroad, and the whole population had assembled to insist on the Government instantly countermanding the movement of the troops despatched against the settlers; and such was the alarm lest the Confederate Squadron should arrive and commence the work of destruction, that even after they knew the expedition had been recalled, they remained all night in the streets watching the northern sky for the first glimpse of the expected foe. Such was the estimation, justly earned, in which the Council of the Confederate Nations was held.

The circumstance of the Central Military Depôt of the Federal Aerial Forces being in England, served to save time. It was the stability of the English character and institutions, added to the insularity of the country's

position, that had led to the other nations fixing on England as the best depository for such a charge.

Assured now that a stranger had nothing to fear, but rather the contrary, from the populace, Criss had no longer a motive for concealment. He determined, however, to reveal himself in such a way as to impress them with a sense of the importance and authority of his mission.

So, making a considerable detour to the north, and ascending high into the air, he rapidly returned in a direct line towards the city, dropping from his car as he flew, signal bombs, which exploded in the air. He was gratified by the result of this scheme in two ways. First, the explosions attracted the attention of the populace, eliciting from them loud cries of terror, and from the authorities signals in reply. And, secondly, they did not wake Nannie.

It was daylight now, when, beheld by myriads of upturned eyes, Criss's car rushed through the air, and alighted upon the flat roof of the lofty building which he had before

ascertained to be the head-quarters of the authorities.

Surprise took the place of fear when it was seen that this little car was alone, and that it contained, apparently, but a solitary individual.

Addressing the people through his speaking-trumpet, Criss desired the principal persons in authority to show themselves on the terrace of the building below, in order that he might hold an interview with them.

These presented themselves, and respectfully enquired of Criss whether he was connected with the threatened expedition of the European Confederacy.

Criss replied in the affirmative, and added that it was not very far behind him. The object of his presence thus early was to obtain in advance of its arrival positive information respecting the situation, especially as it affected the foreigners, and to report to it accordingly. Nothing but the safety of the whites would ensure their own. What had they done towards this end?

They assured him by their chief spokesman that the troops which had been despatched

to the mountains over night would be met on their arrival by positive orders to abandon the enterprise, and return to the capital.

“Can you depend upon their obeying you?” he asked.

It was clear to Criss that this was a perplexing question, and that the revolutionary Government placed very little reliance on the fidelity of the troops in the event of their desire for violence and plunder being thwarted.

“The Federal Squadron,” he said, “will certainly not return home without inflicting punishment, unless they have positive proof that their countrymen are unharmed. It is a part of my duty to proceed to the settlements, and ascertain their condition for myself. When I have actually seen the troops embarked on their way back, I will return and communicate the intelligence to the Federal commanders, whom I shall then doubtless find here. In the meantime you will do well to consider what further steps are practicable for compelling the instant return of the troops.”

After a brief and excited colloquy the chiefs again addressed him, saying,—

"We thank you for the suggestion. We have decided to place the wives and families of the entire force under immediate arrest, and telegraph to the troops that on their failure to obey us, we shall massacre the whole of their families."

Feeling sure that such a necessity would not arise, Criss could not help smiling inwardly at the vigour of the resolution, and the testimony it bore to the wholesome respect for European civilisation felt by these people. He thought of Avenil's doctrine of the physical basis of virtue.

"So far, well," he replied, "but I must proceed thither nevertheless. There is one other point on which I have first to confer with you. This time I speak, not as connected with the Federal Council, but as agent of the fugitive Prince of Abyssinia, your legitimate sovereign, now that his father, the late Emperor, is dead."

Was it certain that he was dead ? they asked eagerly.

"Certain. I was with him when dying, and received his dying injunctions."

They announced to the multitude, who stood watching the conference with vast in-

terest, that Theodoros was really dead ; and a great shout immediately arose, which appeared to Criss to be one of satisfaction.

Was it the Emperor personally, the dynasty, or the form of government, that was obnoxious to them ? he asked,

This question excited an indescribable commotion. It seemed to Criss as if everybody was shouting at once, and shouting conflicting answers. Among the replies he caught one to the effect that they had nothing against the young Prince ; and another, that they would acknowledge no dynasty which did not possess the Talisman of Solomon.

On the hubbub subsiding, the chiefs asked Criss why he should interest himself in their form of government.

“ In this matter,” he replied, “ I act as one who wishes to serve you, the Prince, and all people ; and also as one who has both the power to restore the Prince and the sacred gems, and the will to assist him, if he be restored, in making this one of the happiest countries of the earth,—even to the turning of the Sahara into a garden,” he added, using their favourite hyperbole.

It seemed to him that at this moment they must have obtained a better view of him than during the previous part of the conversation, or had come to take a greater interest in his person ; for, as by one consent, all eyes had commenced intently to scrutinise him, as he stood erect in his car with one hand holding one of the Ariel's side rods, and his speaking-trumpet in the other.

The scrutiny continued for some moments in silence, Criss, on his part, composedly confronting the crowd, and waiting for a reply.

Then as from one huge throat arose the shout,—

“It is the Prince! It is the Prince himself!”

Criss had not thought of the resemblance, and the effect it was likely to produce if observed. Should he utilise the mistake, or undeceive them? To attempt the latter, he at once perceived would be unavailing. What would his word be against the unanimous testimony of their own eyesight? He must therefore utilise the mistake. But before he had time to speak, they cried,—

“Come back, oh Prince! come back to us ;

come back with the Sacred Talisman of thy ancestors, and we will receive thee gladly. But without that no king reigns in Soudan."

"Answer me this, then, before I go forward on the mission that is to save your homes from destruction. Do you pledge yourselves to receive back your Prince, and to remain faithful to him, whenever he shall present himself with the Sacred Talisman?"

The crowd and the chiefs were by this time become as one body. Criss addressed himself alike to all, and all joined in the replies.

"Yes! yes!" they cried; "but where is it now?"

"It is safe, in England."

"England! The land that made us Christians! We admire and respect England, though it afterwards abandoned the faith it had given to us."

"Christians indeed," thought Criss, with an inward sigh, as he remembered how, in close imitation of the long dark ages of Christendom, the country had fostered under that sacred name some of the most degrading superstitions. He thought, too, how natural

it seemed to be for those who remained in the rudiments of things, to regard as apostates and unbelievers, those who proceeded to higher developments.

“England!” they shouted again. “If we restore you to the throne, will you get England to help us to shake off the yoke of the Jews?”

“You may be assured that all this, and much more, will be as you wish, if only you act like an enlightened and civilised people,” returned Criss. “For my part I pledge myself to do my utmost to fulfil your righteous desires. For the present I go to the mountains to see that the land of Soudan does not incur the shame of maltreating strangers to whom its hospitality has been pledged.”

At the moment of departing he paused once more, and writing something on a tablet, he threw it down to the chiefs, desiring them to give it to the commander of the Federal Squadron on his arrival. Beside a message to that officer, it contained also a message for Bertie, in case he should have accompanied the expedition, an event which his knowledge of Avenil caused him to regard as more than probable; and which his scheme for solving

the problem of the situation rendered almost indispensable.

He was anxious to start without further delay, for he heard Nannie moving in the car as if awake, and he was exceedingly averse to her being discovered there.

"Have I been good?" she asked, when they were once more aloft, and on their way back to the settlement. "I did so want to pop my head out while you were talking with those people; but I did not know whether you would like me to be seen."

"You have been the very best of girls," said Criss. "Under the circumstances, it would have been exceedingly inconvenient for you to be seen. I am glad to find you have so much self-control."

"Oh, I haven't a bit of that," she returned, "but I thought you would approve of my keeping still. What would they have done had they caught sight of me?"

"That I cannot exactly say; but it might have interfered with some very important plans which I have."

"You are very young to have anything so important to do."

"Circumstances sometimes force things upon one," answered Criss. "Did you ever happen to see the late Emperor or his son?"

"No, never; but I have heard that the Prince is very good looking. And I hope he is, for I cannot imagine a Prince being ugly."

"Well, they want the Prince to come back and be Emperor; and I promised to let him know, and perhaps help to bring him."

"Why, where is he?"

"I left him yesterday at Jerusalem."

"So you will be going away again," she said, pouting.

"Certainly. I am but a chance visitor to these regions. My home, you know, is in England."

"I'll never be good again," said Nannie, resolutely, after a short pause, and looking very miserable.

"Surely that is a rasher vow than you will find it in your mind to keep."

"Oh, you don't know how bad I can be," she answered. "I have the evildest mind, but I don't think my heart is bad. But I never get anything nice by being good; at least, since grandmother died."

"And how did she reward you?"

"She always kissed me. I have had no one to kiss me since. I would have done anything for her, darling granny. She took all the care that was taken of me after my mother's death. I believe my father hated her only because I was fond of her. He never kissed me in his life, that I can remember."

"It's a pity that I am not your grandmother, Nannie, for then I could have rewarded you as she used to."

"You did kiss me once, you know. But I didn't like it."

"Indeed! I am sorry for that. You must ascribe my unskilfulness to want of practice."

"It isn't practice that's needed," she said, shortly.

"No? What then?"

"Affection. You didn't care for me enough to kiss me in the right place. People who care don't kiss on the forehead," she added, pouting.

"Well, Nannie, I must say that when you put out your lips like that, they do look very much as if they were made for kissing."

"Of course they were," she said. "Only you expect me to be good without rewarding me when I am."

"Well, Nannie ; if a kiss from me, in the right place, be any reward, I am sure you are welcome to so slight a gift."

"Hear the boy!" she exclaimed. "He calls 'a slight gift' what Mattie declares any other man would give his eyes for," and she put her face, covered with an arch smile, close to his—for they were in the same compartment of the car—and pouting like a petulant bewitching child, said,—

"Give it to me, then."

When they had exchanged kisses, Nannie was quiet and content, merely remarking demurely,—

"I suppose I ought to say 'thank you,' for I am evidently the one favoured." And again, after a pause, as if speaking to herself,—

"I do believe he gave it to me because he thought I wanted it, and not because he wanted it himself."

But for Criss, unacquainted as he was with the magnetic phenomena of the lips, a new

order of things seemed to have commenced in the universe. He felt his whole nature for the moment possessed by some novel and powerful sorcery, and scarce knew whether to regard Nannie as woman, child, or witch. Anyhow, he felt convinced that no other pair of lips in the world could have such a power.

It required a much more practised faculty of discernment in such matters than Criss had, to see that, while on one side of Nannie's nature she was as a child starving for an endearing caress, on the other side she was a very woman in her consciousness of the irresistible might of her charms.

CHAPTER X.



It has already been related how Criss visited the troops encamped at the foot of Atlantika, and after a lengthened colloquy ascended to the settlers who were posted on the hill.

His arrival from the capital occurred at a fortunate moment, for the troops were almost in open mutiny against their officers, and disposed to attack the whites, or at least plunder the settlement, in spite of the urgent despatches received from the city, and the positive orders of their commanders. These latter knew enough of the Federal Council and the resources at its disposal, to fear the worst in the event of its menaces being disregarded. With the ignorant soldiery it was different, and the arrival of the despatch from

the authorities in Bornou declaring that in the event of their orders being disobeyed, they would massacre every woman and child belonging to the force, proved a most useful stimulus to their submission.

In this mood, while sullen with disappointment, and angry with the revolutionary leaders, Criss's arrival proved a welcome diversion. It served to give reality to the news from the capital, and reconcile the troops to their own forbearance. Throughout his journey he had been possessed by one apprehension. He feared that the authorities might anticipate his arrival at the camp, by a telegram announcing him as the prince, and notifying their readiness to receive him as Emperor, now that Theodoros was dead. That they had not done so was due only to their distrust of the temper of the troops. The intelligence of the counter-revolution might exasperate them into committing the violence now so much deprecated.

So Criss himself was the bearer of the news that the aerial squadrons of the Confederate Nations of Europe were hourly expected at the capital ; that the Emperor was

dead, and the whole people ready to welcome the prince, who, on his part, was prepared to rule in accordance with their wishes. The one thing necessary now was that he should be enabled to return almost immediately to the city, and inform the Federal commanders that he had himself seen that the whites were unmolested, and the troops actually in the trains, and on their return home. As for their present disappointment, they ought to be thankful at having escaped the disgrace of violating the laws of hospitality in regard to the white settlers; and, for the future, let them only prove faithful to their new engagements, and a compensation would not be lacking under the restored régime.

Criss committed Nannie to the charge of her relatives on the hill, telling them that she had been injured by a fall, and required attention. Nannie herself was too disconcerted by the necessity for Criss's speedy departure to say much about herself. Indeed, if the full truth were to be told, it would have to be admitted that for several hours she was much too cross to open her mouth.

Criss gave the settlers a sketch of the

position of affairs, and as soon as he had seen the last train moving off with the troops, started on his way back to the capital, having promised Nannie to return before long, and enquire after her wounds.

It was with considerable anxiety that Criss once more approached the city. Knowing how shallow and fickle are all uncultivated peoples, especially those reared under the tropics, he feared that the resolution of the Bornouse would not long hold, excepting under the pressure of a palpable object of dread. It was mainly to the expected arrival of the Federal squadron that the recent conversion had been due. Should any chance occur to delay its coming until after the return of the troops from the hills, it was impossible to say what revulsion of sentiment might take place. At any rate, thought Criss, it would not do for him to show himself again until backed by the expected force. It was therefore with much anxiety that he kept his look-out as he approached the city.

The excitement in the Bornouse capital was intense, when at length the word was given that Something was visible in the

northern horizon. Taking it for granted that such Something could only be the expected expedition, the whole population flocked to the roofs of their houses, and all the most elevated places, to witness the portentous advent.

They were not disappointed, either in the fact of the Something being the aerial fleet, or in the strangeness of the aspect it presented.

Swiftly and steadily the vessels came careering onwards, looming larger and larger as they approached, resembling, in their order and regularity, a flight of gigantic wild-fowl ; for now they would range themselves in long lines, wedge-shape, one behind the other ; now expand into curves, and then stretch straight out into one long array, like an advancing line of battle ; and finally, as they came up to the menaced capital, reversing the direction of their line, so as to arrive singly, one after the other, the car of the admiral in command having the lead.

Arrived directly over the city, they suddenly brought up, and remained nearly stationary. As they paused on high, keeping

themselves, by a slight movement of their machinery, floating slowly about, now spread out over the whole area of the city, now collected into a compact mass, it might well have seemed to the myriads of the inhabitants, who, with upturned faces, were gazing from below, that they themselves were fishes at the bottom of the sea, and that this was a vast fleet of huge war ships, whose dark hulls lay floating on the surface.

It was indeed a far larger force than was necessary for the task of destroying a city. But the chance had been utilised as an occasion for practice ; and in addition to the vessels of destruction, the Council had deemed it advisable to despatch a large number of transports, in case it should prove necessary to remove the white settlers from the country.

So impressed was the multitude with the aspect of these mighty engines of war, lying so secure in their calm grandeur, far out of reach, that they remained hushed as in terrified expectation of the sudden descent of the shower of all-consuming fire with which they had been threatened.

The national flag, exhibited by being

stretched horizontally above the Hall of Government, indicated to the aerial squadron the headquarters of the authorities. Presently a line was seen, with a despatch attached to it, descending from the car of the admiral, straight upon the Hall, where the chiefs were collected.

With eager anxiety, it was received and read.

Briefly stating the nature and object of the expedition, the message asked what plea the city could urge against being instantly destroyed.

A reply was returned, stating that no injury whatever had been, or would be done to the white settlers, and that the troops sent against them had been recalled, and were then on their way back. Moreover, that it had been determined to restore the Empire, by setting the Prince of Abyssinia on the throne, and that the prince had gone in person to assure himself of the safety of the foreigners, and was hourly expected to return to meet the chiefs of the Federal Expedition.

Together with this reply they sent up the note left by Criss.

"Bless the boy!" exclaimed Bertie to the admiral (for owing to Avenil's sagacious intervention, and powerful interest, Bertie was indeed there). "Bless the boy! what does it all mean? I know he left the prince at Jerusalem yesterday morning. Can they be trying to deceive us? Yet this is his writing, sure enough."

"Who is *he*?" asked the admiral.

"A difficult question to answer all at once," replied Bertie. "For the last twenty-one years *he* has occupied the position of ward to Lord Avenil and myself; and now having come to his fortune, he is looking for an investment for it."

"Large?" asked the admiral, who delighted in the laconic, and spoke as if his habit of navigating the air had made him short of wind: so reluctant is professional mannerism to yield to the advance of civilisation.

"Millions," replied Bertie, unconsciously adopting the admiral's style; and in his desire to win credit for Criss, totally forgetting his pledge of secrecy.

"What has he to do with these people?"

"Has friends here, and came to save them."

"All by himself?" said the admiral, with an incredulous air.

"But for him we should probably have been too late."

"We should have taken ample revenge, though."

"So that he has saved the city as well as the settlers."

"Humph," said the admiral.

"Please, sir," said an officer, entering, "a visitor has called to see the officer commanding the expedition."

It was Criss, who, seeing the fleet resting over the city, had steered straight for the admiral's car. Having attached his own to it, he came on board.

"Mr. Carol, my late ward," said Bertie, introducing him.

"Glad to see you, sir," said the admiral. "Can you throw any light on this document? What do these people mean by *the prince*?"

"They mean me," said Criss, smiling; and he briefly related the circumstances under

which the threatened outrage had been averted, and the dynasty restored.

"You have got yourself into a mess, young gentleman," said the admiral, when he had concluded.

"Not a bit of it," said Bertie, somewhat brusquely, and to the admiral's surprise, for he was not used to being contradicted, least of all in his own fashion and on board his own vessel, and he did not like it. But Bertie, gentle and patient as he was, would not brook the least snub to Criss.

"How can anyone be in a mess," he asked, "when he can fly away to the ends of the earth, without a possibility of being tracked or overtaken?"

"I see the difficulty plainly enough," said Criss; "but it is in your power, admiral, and Bertie's, if he will join, to set things right."

"How so? I am not here to meddle with local politics," said the admiral, who entertained considerable respect for Criss's millions. "I have nothing to do with restoring dynasties, or changing governments for the folks here. That is their own affair.

I must send an answer down. How

do I know that the foreign residents are safe?"

"I have just left them returning to their homes untouched," replied Criss, "having first seen the troops in the trains, and on their way back."

"You have done excellently well," said the admiral; "but it will not do for me to go home and say I have been *told* such and such things. I must report on my own authority."

"Then leave part of your force here; at least until the troops have returned, and go with another part to the hills, and visit the settlers yourself," suggested Criss.

"And how about the mock prince? Besides, I must exact guarantees for the future."

"Let us get the true prince over, and he will give them to you."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the admiral, unconsciously illustrating by his choice of an adjuration, the marvellous vitality of the ancient Pagan theism.

"But they suppose him to be already here," remarked Bertie; "and will probably be exasperated on discovering their mistake."

"Why need they discover it?" said Criss.

"Admiral, what do you think of this plan? That you go and visit all the settlements, taking three or four days about it, and letting the authorities here suppose that the prince has accompanied you. And in the meantime Bertie and I will go to Jerusalem and fetch the prince, and put him on board of you, before he assumes the throne."

"Humph," said the admiral; and taking a tablet he wrote upon it, and showed them what he proposed to send down. It was to the effect that he should leave part of his force to threaten the city, and send part to the settlements to inspect the condition of the foreigners. On its return they would be at liberty to reconstruct the government. In the meantime a telegraph to Europe must be placed at the service of the expedition, for which purpose he would let down a connecting wire, and mooring tackle.

"Expedition arrived off Bornou. All well. Settlers reported safe." This was the first message sent to relieve anxiety in Europe.

While the admiral was superintending the execution of these details, Criss and Bertie

conversed together. The matter was one on which they seemed unable to make up their minds; for, addressing the admiral, Bertie said,—

“Admiral, we want your advice, not professionally, but as a man of practical knowledge and wisdom. You may, or may not, know that in this country the prestige of the crown has long been bound up with its possession of a certain heir-loom, called the *Talisman of Solomon*. It consists of an exceedingly magnificent set of diamonds and other gems—crown jewels, in fact, of the ancient empire of Abyssinia,—whose royal family, as you doubtless know, claim direct descent from Solomon,—and now of the united empires of Abyssinia and Soudan. I cannot, perhaps, better illustrate the transcendent importance attached in this country to the possession of this talisman, than by comparing it to the place formerly occupied in any country by the sacred books of its religion; as, for instance, in our own land, prior to the Emancipation, by the Bible. We now hold the Bible to be of such high intrinsic value as to be incapable of gaining in prestige

by being converted into a Fetich. It is the same with these jewels, only the people here are still ignorant and superstitious, and so think more of traditions and sorceries than of any intrinsic worth and beauty.

“ Well, the Talisman of Solomon has been believed to be lost. The prince himself supposes it lost, and mistrusts the stability of his throne for want of it. Thus he may, when it comes to the point, hesitate to trust himself back in the country. My young friend here, however, has pledged himself to the people to bring back not only the prince, but also the crown jewels, provided the dynasty be restored. We have agreed to go and fetch the prince at once. What do you think about the jewels? Is it better that they come with the prince, or after a certain period; and then on condition of the continued good conduct both of people and Emperor?”

Criss could not help smiling at this very elliptical statement. He was not sure whether it was by accident or design that Bertie had made the omission which rendered it utterly unintelligible.

“ It strikes me you are in a second scrape,

young sir," said the admiral to Criss. "It is a pity they are lost, for one great blow is worth any number of successive taps. The prince's return with the Talisman they think so much of, would produce far greater effect than any subsequent proceedings. There is nothing for it, that I can see, but to postpone the diamonds until paste ones can be made."

This ingenious solution of the supposed difficulty drew hearty laughter from both Criss and Bertie. The admiral looking surprised, Bertie hastened to explain.

"We are laughing, admiral, at my stupidity in omitting to mention that, so far from being really lost, the jewels in question are safe in England, and actually in possession of my young friend here. How they came so, is too long a story to be told now. No, the question is, whether we shall let them remain there for the present, or telegraph for them to be sent to meet us and the prince at Jerusalem, and then bring them on with us."

The admiral was too stupefied with astonishment to be able to make a sugges-

tion. The point was finally settled by Criss's remarking,—

“I am thinking that I ought to have some guarantee for the good conduct of the prince, as well as you for that of the people. So I have made up my mind to retain possession of the jewels for the present, and make their return conditional. I shall fix his coronation for the anniversary of his accession, and if I am satisfied with him, let him wear them for the first time on that occasion.”

“Well, gentlemen,” said the admiral, “I remember reading the Arabian Nights in my youth ; but I do not remember that the Genii who played with kingdoms ever took the form of a young man of twenty-one. Supposing, however, that I am not in an Arabian Night at this moment, and that everything about me is real and genuine, I can only say that the last notion strikes me as an exceedingly sensible one. When one has a hold on great people, as you seem to have on this prince, it is well to keep it. That settled, there is no longer any cause for delaying your start. I presume you feel confident he will consent to return with you ? If he does not, you must lose no time in telegraphing the fact to me,

that the return of the fleet be not needlessly delayed."

"What do you think," asked Bertie, "of lending us an escort, Admiral?"

"Impossible, without leave from home; and Jerusalem is about the last place with which the Council would run the risk of having a misunderstanding. Besides, you must not lose time; and my heavily armed craft do not sacrifice everything to speed. I shall not, however, hesitate to take upon myself the responsibility of granting you, Mr. Greathead, the leave of absence needful to enable you to quit the fleet. And when the prince returns, with the approbation of the country, I shall be happy to join in any demonstration that may both serve as a compliment and mark the termination of a successful mission."

So Criss and Bertie set off, Criss in his favourite Ariel, and Bertie in his more capacious vessel, for Jerusalem, Bertie being furnished with a formal document, granting him leave of absence from the expedition for one week in the interests of the foreign settlers in Soudan.

CHAPTER XI.

HE Prince desired, before returning to occupy the throne of his ancestors, to fulfil an appointment he had made with the Soudan Bondholders' Committee of the puissant Stock Exchange of Jerusalem. Between the fears entertained by these of a total repudiation of the debt, and the desires of his countrymen to be relieved of the burden of its interest, he hoped to effect a compromise agreeable to both parties.

Criss readily agreed to the delay of a day, or even two, before returning, as he was anxious to visit Damascus and the Lebanon in order to ascertain some particulars about his family. Bertie accompanied him on this quest, but before quitting Jerusalem, they

consulted a solicitor respecting the laws of inheritance and abandoned property.

The solicitor perfectly remembered the fact of the disappearance of the old merchant and his family from the country, and said that the property thus left without a claimant would remain in the custody of the local authorities for twenty-one years, at the expiration of which it would be sold, and the proceeds applied to the public use. These, however, were liable to be reclaimed by the natural heirs at any time during a further period of twenty-one years.

"The twenty-one years," he said, referring to a register, "since the disappearance to which you refer took place, have quite recently expired. You will probably find, therefore, that the houses in question are at this moment being inspected and cleared, in order to be taken possession of by some incoming purchaser. Property in this country is too valuable to be long left idle."

It was not without considerable emotion that Criss found himself at length about to visit the home of his mother. Of her unhappy fate there was no room for doubt. But

he did not know whether his father was living. If he were, Criss thought, surely he would put in a claim for the property of his wife's father. If he had not done so, surely the fact might be accepted as an assurance of his death.

On enquiring in the proper quarter, Criss found that shortly after the disappearance an attempt had been made to obtain possession of the property in question. It had been done through an agent, who had kept the name of his principal a profound secret. The attempt had failed, owing, it was supposed, to the inability of the applicant to prove himself legally entitled to the succession, for the claim had never been renewed.

The story told by Bertie before the local court in Damascus created extraordinary interest. Many of the older members declared that they perceived a strong resemblance between the young man and the members of the lost family. The case could not be finally decided at once, but in consideration of all the circumstances, and upon securities being given for the restitution of the property in the event of the claim being ultimately dis-

allowed, Criss was permitted to take possession of all documents and other movables found in the houses.

These articles, therefore, were put into the train (for this excursion had been made by railroad), and taken to the hotel in Jerusalem, where Criss and Bertie spent a great part of the night in examining and deciphering their contents.

The result of the interview between the Committee and the Prince had been unsatisfactory, owing to the inability of the latter to give any confirmation of the intelligence upon which he had relied to influence their decision. The telegraph between Bornou and Jerusalem had been stopped by the revolutionary chiefs, and the Jews knew that such a result as the restoration of the Empire did not come within the scope of the Federal Expedition. In common with the rest of the world, they had learnt the news of the safety of the settlers. But the Prince did not deem himself justified in revealing at present the grounds of his expectation of a speedy and happy restoration.

He himself, in relating all this to his two

friends, ascribed much of his difficulty with the Board to the hostility of one of its members, who seemed to have a personal feeling against him and his cause. This was the President, a man of vast repute for commercial sagacity, not famous for scrupulousness, and believed to be mainly of Greek origin, though naturalised as a citizen of Jerusalem.

In answer to a taunt from this personage, the Prince had requested an adjournment of the Conference, until the following afternoon, in order that he might consult with his friends as to the expediency of placing the Committee in possession of further information.

The result of the previous day's conference had been to excite immense interest respecting the affairs of Soudan. The confident tone and bearing of the fugitive Prince, had produced a profound impression on the Board, although its members had studiously concealed the feeling from him. His positive assertions that his father was dead ; that the throne was awaiting his acceptance ; and that the indispensable Talisman had survived one more startling chance, and would be forth-

coming on his coronation, had excited the curiosity of the millionaires of Jerusalem to the highest pitch ; and it needed only the notification which the Prince sent them after again seeing Criss and Bertie, that he would produce his authorities, to fill the Great Salon in the Hall of Commerce with an attendance unprecedented.

The question for the money-kings of Israel, whose fortunes were to a great extent involved in the stability of Soudan, was whether the Prince should be regarded as virtually Emperor, and entitled to their highest consideration, or whether he should be regarded as a penniless fugitive, and the dupe of unprincipled adventurers.

The Stock Exchange of Jerusalem—a new and magnificent building—stands upon the site once occupied by the famous Temple of Solomon, and subsequently by the Mosque of Omar. The arrangements of the salon are such as to give it the aspect of a court for state trials. The place assigned to the Appellant, as persons holding the Prince's relation to the Committee are styled, is a

small, isolated stage, situated opposite the centre of a vast semi-circular platform, but at a somewhat lower level.

On this platform sat the Committee and a large assemblage of the principal members of the Stock Exchange, the heads of all the great mercantile houses, and the governing chiefs of the Jewish people. It was an assembly representative of the world's wealth of accumulated industry and realised property; an assembly transcending in mere money-power that of any government on the face of the earth.

The meeting was only so far not public, in that the reporters of the press were not admitted in their recognised capacity. But that the press did not lack competent representatives on this occasion may be seen by the report of the conference contained in the following chapter, which appeared the same evening in a special late edition of the *Zion Herald*.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REVOLUTION IN SOUDAN.

ALLEGED COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

IS IT A SHAM?

THE PRINCE AND THE COMMITTEE.

A BRITISH MILLIONNAIRE-AERIALIST IN
THE SCRAPE.

STRANGE, IF TRUE!

STRANGER, IF FALSE!

WHO SHALL BE KING?

Zion Herald Office, 10 p.m.



WE doubt whether, since the days of Hezekiah, when the Assyrian emissary Rabshekah held his memorable interview with "the men that sat on the wall," Jerusalem has witnessed a

more remarkable meeting than that which took place this afternoon in the Hall of Commerce. Certainly the only event of modern times which can parallel it in interest is that of the Restoration itself. We have kept our readers so well posted in the affairs of Central Africa, that we need not waste their time and ours in recapitulating the situation of which to-day's occurrences are the climax.

It will be remembered that on the breaking out of the revolt, the Emperor Theodoros disappeared, together—in point of time, at least—with the crown jewels, which are reckoned the palladium of the country; and that his son and heir, the Imperial Prince of Abyssinia, took refuge in this city. Our report of yesterday's meeting of the Soudan Bondholders' Committee, conveyed to our readers the startling change in the demeanour of the Prince, who, for reasons entirely unknown to them, had suddenly exchanged his *rôle* of suppliant for that of dictator.

The meeting was scarcely less remarkable for the number and standing of the persons who attended it, than for the singularity of the events which it witnessed. Among those

present were the heads of all our great mercantile and banking houses, numerous members of the Sanhedrim, including the venerable chief of that august body, the representatives of the allied provinces of Persia, Arabia, and the Euphrates, and nearly all the foreign ministers accredited to the Jewish Government. The predominant expectation was that the Prince would fail utterly to show ground for the new position he had taken up, and the betting was accordingly against him.

On entering the salon, which was already crowded, we found the Prince with two other foreign gentlemen, one somewhat past middle age, the other considerably younger, sitting in the appellant's box, awaiting the commencement of the interpellations. These began by the president of the committee, who is also president of the Stock Exchange, addressing the Prince, saying that the Board readily acknowledged his status as heir to the throne of Soudan, and sympathised in his misfortunes; but that before admitting his right to represent that country by entering into business-relations with its creditors, they must have sufficient ground for believing, first,

that the Emperor, his father, was dead ; and, secondly, that the country acknowledged him as successor to the crown.

Here the Prince rose and, bowing with dignity, replied that he was now prepared to afford the Court the same information that he himself possessed. He would first, therefore, present to them his friend Mr. Carol, of London, and request him to state what he knew of the late Emperor's death.

The young man whom we have mentioned as sitting beside the Prince, then rose and stated that he was ready to answer any question affecting the matter before the Court, but should reserve to himself the right to be silent respecting matters which were private to himself—a reservation at which the President very visibly arched his eyebrows ; while the Prince himself appeared somewhat surprised, not to say, disconcerted. The elder stranger, however, unmistakably betrayed his amusement by a smile, and a glance at his companion, which was easily interpretable as signifying, “Well, you are a cool hand, young sir.” As the sequel proved, the occurrence formed no exception to the maxim contained

in our Jerusalem Normal-school copybooks, that,—

“It is easy to be self-possessed in the presence of millionnaires, *when one happens to be a millionaire oneself.*”

“We will endeavour to respect the reservation,” said the President, with the formal courtesy of the man of the world who knows the value of such a demeanour. “The Prince has described you as his friend. We will not, for the present at least, dispute the satisfactoriness of his voucher. Pray, then, be so good as to state the circumstances which are within your own knowledge respecting the death of the late Emperor of Soudan.”

The young man then proceeded to narrate, in a manner so simple and voice so touching as to win all hearts, how that about the middle of last month, while returning from a visit in Central Africa to keep his birthday with his friends in England, and travelling as he was accustomed, by himself, in an aerial car, he passed over the Bornouse capital while the insurrection was in full progress and the royal palace in flames. That continuing his way without touching ground, he chanced, while

traversing the Sahara at a very low altitude, to hear a sound as of some one in pain; and on alighting, found a disabled flying machine of old-fashioned construction, whose sole occupant was a wounded man. That he carried with him to Algiers this man, who must otherwise have perished in the desert, and deposited him with a surgeon, and would have remained by him to the last had not his duties required his presence in England. He had, therefore, after remaining in Algiers a couple of days, committed him specially to the care of the British Minister, intending to return to Algiers with all speed. That this intention was frustrated, as on Christmas eve a special messenger came from the Minister, stating that the man he had rescued from the desert had died of his wounds, and bearing a packet with a written communication, which made it absolutely certain that he who had been thus picked up, was no other than the unfortunate Emperor of Central Africa.

This statement was received with profound astonishment by the Court; but, what seemed most curious, by no one was it received with such evident surprise as by the Prince him-

self. It was clear that even with him his friend had made certain "reservations," and that he was now for the first time learning the particulars of his father's death.

"May we be made acquainted more fully with the nature of the communication to which you refer?" asked the President.

"Its main purport," replied the young Englishman, "was to thank me for my services in his behalf, and to commend his son to my friendship. The original is in London in keeping of the lawyers of my guardian—Lord Avenil."

Here the elder stranger whispered something to the witness Carol, from which he seemed to dissent. He then said aloud to the Court,—

"The British Minister, who, I believe, is present, can state whether he has received from the Minister at Algiers the corroboration of my statement for which I requested him this morning to telegraph."

"It is true," said the British Minister, rising, and addressing the Court, "that a stranger of Central Africa, evidently a man of distinction, arrived badly hurt at Algiers

at the time and in the manner we have heard related ; but he made no revelation to the Minister concerning his name or quality. His sole confidences were given to this young gentleman, for whose genuineness and trustworthiness my colleague at Algiers energetically vouches."

Here the elder stranger rose, and said that he was present when the packet in question arrived, and was acquainted with its contents.

In answer to the Court's enquiry, this witness stated that his name is Greathead ; that he is a professional aeronaut, officially attached to the aerial expedition of the Confederated Nations to Central Africa, and at present absent on special leave to come to Jerusalem. He exhibited a document to that effect, dated three days ago, and bearing the signature and official seal of the admiral in command.

A glance of astonishment ran through the assembly on finding so stout a testimony to the accuracy of the Prince's information, and finding it, too, in the person of an official of the expedition. The President alone seemed unmoved by it. In the same tone of cold,

measured courtesy, which had marked his manner throughout, he said,—

“It seems strange to the Court that your services could be spared so soon after the expedition reached the scene of its intended operations.”

“Not stranger to the Court than to myself,” answered the aeronaut Greathead, in a loud, hearty, abrupt tone, which contrasted curiously with the keen inflection of the President’s voice: “not stranger to the Court than to myself; but my dear boy here can tell you all about it, if he chooses. It is all owing to him that the revolution in Soudan is over, the white settlers safe, and the throne waiting to receive the new Emperor as soon as he will let us carry him back.”

The President did not give the assembly time to indulge the surprise it felt at this speech, but addressing the last witness, said,—

“You are, perhaps, not acquainted with the superstitious character of the people of Soudan. But it is an undoubted fact that no sovereign has a chance of acceptance unless he be in tutelary possession of certain jewels,

known as the Talisman of Solomon, from whom the royal family of the country claims descent——”

“And therefore I have promised,” interrupted the younger Englishman, “that, on the occasion of his coronation,—which I have, in my own mind, fixed for the first anniversary of his accession,—the Sacred Talisman shall be forthcoming; that is, provided he proves by his conduct in the meantime—as I have no doubt he will do—that he is not unworthy of his high position.”

And having said this, he turned and cast upon the Prince a glance of such warm friendship, as only a long and intimate acquaintance would seem to account for.

This speech, so extraordinary for its apparent and manifold presumption, was uttered in a simple, eager manner, and without a particle of consciousness of its almost preternatural boldness, on the part of the speaker.

The Prince himself was for several moments absolutely stupefied with surprise. Then starting to his feet he confronted the youth Carol, with an air that demanded an

explanation as to who it was that thus constituted himself the arbiter of his destiny. But the young man merely said to him,—

“Not now, my dear Prince. You shall know all in good time.”

The President overhearing his remark, himself addressed the witness, saying,—

“If we are to make the concessions desired, it is necessary that we be fully enlightened; and for that, it seems to the Court, no time can be so good as the present.”

“You forget my reservation,” answered Carol. “I especially exempted anything that touched upon my private affairs. All that I care to state now is, that the secret of the crown jewels and their whereabouts, has been committed to me, and that I shall reveal it at the fitting time.”

They had been standing side by side since the Prince had risen, and it now became evident from the whispering going on among the audience, that some startling suggestion was being discussed by them. The whispers became general, and then all eyes were turned upon the pair in intent scrutiny. Then the

President, addressing the young Englishman, said,—

“Have you any objection to giving the Court some particulars of your birth and parentage?”

“I cannot,” he returned, “of my own knowledge, give the information you ask, though no doubt I was present on the occasion. But there is one here who is both able and free to relate what he knows about it.” And he indicated the elder foreigner.

“Mr. Greathead,” said the President, “will you have the kindness to give the Court any information you possess on this head? The birth, for instance, of Mr. Carol,—where did it take place?”

The witness stood erect, and assuming an air of the utmost gravity, pointed upwards, and said solemnly,—

“In heaven!”

“We are aware,” said the President, “that you are an aeronaut. Did it take place in one of your own aeromotives?”

Everybody, probably, except himself, noticed that the President’s voice had of late

entirely lost its keenness of tone, and his manner its severity.

"It occurred thus," said the witness. Greathead. "I, and some others, were stranded on an iceberg in the Arctic seas, when a balloon was blown to us,—a balloon of old-fashioned and foreign make,—a floating, rather than a flying machine. This child was in it, evidently only just born——"

"And the other occupants?"

"When the balloon reached us it had but one, an old man, an Asiatic, who expired shortly afterwards."

"But—but—you said the child was but just born. The old man could—could—could not have been its MOTHER! Where was SHE, then?"

The loud, eager, and excited way in which the President jerked out this extraordinary speech, his eyes almost starting from his head, and his forehead streaming with perspiration, attracted the observation of the whole assembly. On being further informed by Greathead that there was reason to suppose a woman had fallen out and been lost, very shortly before the balloon reached the

iceberg, he seemed to be gathering up his whole strength to ask one more question.

"When,—when was this?"

"Christmas-day, twenty-one years ago."

At this, with a cry, the President dropped senseless into his chair.

Fortunately a medical man was present, and to him the patient was committed, while the people talked together in groups.

Some who knew the President intimately, said that it must be a heart complaint, to which he had been liable ever since a loss he had suffered many years ago. Presently it was announced that he was better, and refused to suspend the sitting for more than a few minutes, when he expected to be himself again.

At length the President announced the resumption of the sitting. He asked the full name of the younger foreigner.

"Christmas Carol," was the reply.

"I knew it! I knew it! Mr. President," shouted a voice from the back part of the platform. And there could be seen struggling to the front the venerable figure of one of our most successful, and therefore deser-

vedly respected, citizens, well known in connection with the diamond trade.

"I knew it, Mr. President," he cried, "the moment I saw Mr. Greathead, the aeronaut. To my knowledge, those jewels were in his possession nearly twenty-one years ago, having been long previously spirited away from Bornou, and lost in the great volcano of the Pacific. I myself was the agent of their sale to the Court of Soudan, at the time of the late Emperor's coronation. I ask now by what devil's magic they have again come to light, and in the possession of this youth?"

"Do you dispute his right and title to them?" asked the President, with a curious smile.

"It is for me to do that, if anybody may," interposed the Prince.

"And do you dispute it?" asked the President, with the same perplexing expression on his face.

"I am too much in the dark to affirm or dispute anything," he replied.

Here the young stranger rose, and said that he thought they were rather wandering from the main question. It was necessary

for the Prince to start with himself and friend without delay, if he was to redeem the pledge which had been given on his behalf to the people of Bornou. It was important, moreover, that his return should have the benefit of the distinction which the presence and homage of the Federal expedition would give it. He added that the circumstance that the people believed the Prince to be at that moment actually in the country, and living as a voluntary hostage with the commander of the expedition, made any delay most perilous to his chances. So that, whether the Committee acceded to his wishes or not, it was better for him to go at once than to wait.

This was a new complication, and after listening to some suggestions of his colleagues, the President, still with an undefinable expression, but with a manner full of suavity, enquired of Carol how the people of Bornou came to labour under such a delusion.

"In the conference which I held with them," replied the witness, "they took me for him, and insisted that I was the Prince."

The singularity of the President's reply to this answer, added to the peculiarity of his

manner, produced at first the impression that his mind was still affected by his recent attack.

"It is clear then," he said, "that you might return and personate the Prince, and occupy the throne as Emperor, without suspicion or risk. We can see for ourselves the resemblance of which you speak. It is as close as could well subsist even between nearly-related members of the same family. For my part, and I have every reason to feel secure of the assent of my colleagues, I am ready to grant the terms asked of us, provided you yourself occupy the throne of Soudan. You evidently have all the mental requisites for such a position, and the strange fatality which has once more put you in possession of the sacred gems, marks you out for the post whose previous occupants have been so ready to abandon it at the first sign of danger."

It was not the first time during this remarkable conference that the prevailing sentiment had been one of profound astonishment. But it was the first time that an expression of surprise had been suffered to invade the self-

*.

possession of the young Englishman. His voice, when at length he recovered himself sufficiently to speak, betrayed yet another feeling than that of surprise ; for he spoke in tones of anger and indignation, demanding of the President,—

“ Do you, sir, when you counsel me to a course of treachery and dishonour, really know to whom you are speaking ?”

“ I know that you are worthy of a kingdom, both by merit and by station. Why refuse to be a king ?”

The interest with which this strange colloquy was listened to, was of the most intense description. Even those who had deemed the President's mind affected, thought they now discerned a sound meaning beneath his words. Whatever their meaning was, they evidently did not strike the young Englishman as irrational or incoherent. Faintly and slowly, yet with intense distinctness, he at length said,—

“ No kingdom of this world possesses attractions for me. To no spot of earth do I care to be tied. My life and interest lie yonder,” and he pointed upwards, in manifest

allusion to his passion for atmospheric yachting. "Why tempt me thus?"

A haggard look came over the face of the President. He shook like one in a palsy, and his voice was harsh and hoarse as he essayed to reply. He commenced a sentence and then broke off, and commenced another of different purport. At length he said,—

"Am I to understand that you finally and decidedly refuse to avail yourself of the chance I have put before you?"

Instead of answering this query, Carol turned to the Prince, who sat lost in amazement as to what it all could mean. The Prince rose at his look; when Carol, grasping one of his hands with one of his own, and throwing the other round his neck, cried,—

"Fear not, my COUSIN! It is not I who will supplant you."

At this arose questionings as to who this could be that thus claimed close kindred with the best blood of Israel. It was while the two young men, looking so marvellously like each other that none could have told them apart, gazed into each other's faces—the

Prince evidently bewildered, as at a revelation he could not all at once comprehend—that the President, demanding silence, said—

“Christmas Carol, now that you positively refuse to entertain my suggestion, I will answer your question why I tempted you thus. It is because I am your father! And, being your father, partake the enmity which your mother’s branch of the family bore to the branch reigning in Soudan. I have sworn that so long as that branch occupied the throne in which it supplanted ours, Israel should deal usuriously with its people. I would see my son Emperor—that son, who by belonging to the elder branch, is the true and rightful heir. Tell me, has my revelation taken you by surprise?”

“I knew all, save that you were my father.”

“When did you obtain your information?”

“Last night, from the documents I found in my grandfather’s houses in Damascus and the Lebanon. I learnt too, what yonder diamond merchant will be interested in knowing,—how the crown jewels were saved from the crater of Kilauea. The Californian

sovereign carried them in a belt upon his person. His confidential agent and minister was no other than my grandfather himself, who had obtained possession of them before his exile from Soudan, and sold them to him. He accompanied the Emperor of the North Pacific in his flight ; and seeing them on the point of being lost when the Emperor fell into the volcano, he darted after him in order to rescue, not the man, but the jewels, and this at the imminent risk of his own life. And he succeeded ; for he grappled with the falling monarch, and as they rushed downward through the air together, tore the sacred gems from his person, and then let go to save himself, while the king pursued his downward career, and was lost in the fiery gulf. This have I learnt from my grandfather's papers."

Here a private but animated conversation occurred in a group in which we recognised several of the most distinguished members of the Stock Exchange and of the Sanhedrim. They appeared after a little to have come to an agreement on some knotty point, for the venerable chief of the Sanhedrim came forward, and addressing the Court, said that while

in all matters affecting the foreign policy of the nation they deferred to the authority of the Stock Exchange, it devolved upon him as chief of the home and local government to put certain questions to the young gentleman respecting whom such remarkable revelations had just been made.

"And first," he said, "I have to enquire precisely respecting the gems composing the sacred Talisman of Solomon. Whom do you, sir, consider the lawful proprietor at this moment?"

"Myself, undoubtedly," replied Mr. Carol, (who will forgive us for not encumbering our present narrative with his newly-discovered titles of honour). "Myself, undoubtedly. But I consider that I hold them in trust for the future Emperor of Soudan."

The old man shook his head and smiled blandly.

"There is a want of legal precision in your language. Not that this detracts from your merits, my dear Prince, as a prince, if you will allow me to be the first so to call you. If you hold them in trust for another, they are not your own. May I ask you to

define your title to them more precisely?"

"I consider that I have four distinct grounds of ownership," replied the young man. "First, I inherit them from my grandfather, to whose property there is no joint or rival claimant. Secondly, they were found on an iceberg, when otherwise they were hopelessly lost, and settled on me as a free gift by the finder, my beloved foster-father and guardian here, Bertie Greathead. Thirdly, they are mine by right of a clause inserted in the bill of sale by which they were transferred to the late Emperor, a clause reserving to me the right of repurchasing them within one year of my coming of age."

"You are a better lawyer than I was giving you credit for being," interrupted his interrogator, "though you have failed to perceive that all this depends upon the validity of your grandfather's title. But, my dear sir, are you aware that few men, even in Jerusalem, possess a fortune sufficient to purchase those jewels?"

"I do not lack the means," responded the young man, with the admirable simplicity of

one born to vast fortunes. "And I have yet another title to them, and one that renders it unnecessary to rely on my inheritance from my grandfather. But for me, they had been lost for ever in the great Sahara. Moreover, my right to them was recognised by the late Emperor, both in the fact of his purchasing them of me at their full value, and his consenting to my reclamation of them. His dying injunctions prove this. At the same time he commended his son to me. It is at my option, then, either to restore to him the jewels, or to give him their equivalent in money. But for the happy termination of the revolution which excluded him from the throne, he would, of course, have preferred to receive their value."

The Chief of the Sanhedrim here raised his bent form to its full height, and glancing round on the assembly as if with conscious pride in the supreme importance of the words he was about to utter, said,—

"Then, since these invaluable crown jewels are your very own, as well as means ample enough to have purchased them if they had not been so ; and since you are, next to the

Prince of Abyssinia and Emperor of Soudan, the sole survivor of a royal race in Israel, I, on behalf of my brethren of the Sanhedrim, and the people of Palestine as represented by a quorum of the Stock Exchange of Jerusalem here assembled, do invite you to solve the difficulty which has long operated to the national disadvantage, and accept the throne of Syria and the adjoining provinces of Persia, Arabia, and the Euphrates. You have yourself proved that the Sacred Talisman of Solomon is your own, by a treble or quadruple right. The lawful possessor of that talisman alone is worthy to sit on the throne of David and Solomon, ruling the tribes of Israel."

As he concluded, loud acclaims rent the air, and many a hoary head bowed in thankfulness, and many a lip trembling with emotion uttered the ancient expression of supreme content, "Now can I depart in peace, having seen the salvation of Israel."

The Prince of Soudan, however, was observed to turn very pale, doubtless thinking that the boasted heirloom of his race had now in very deed departed from him for ever.

The first attempt of the new-found Prince of Israel to reply to this flattering proposal, was lost in the hubbub of voices congratulating each other on the successful issue to a long and difficult search ; for, as all the world knows, it needs but a sovereign worthy to sit on the throne of Jerusalem, to consolidate a great eastern empire under Jewish sway.

On essaying a second time to make himself heard, for none heeded his answer, taking for granted its affirmative character, the elder Englishman was observed to say something as if in remonstrance to the prospective monarch of the Orient. When, after this, he obtained a hearing, he said, with becoming modesty, that a proposition of such magnitude was one for deliberating upon, for which a certain time was necessary. Let the meeting be adjourned, and perhaps on the following day he would be prepared to communicate his decision to the authorities.

The Assembly then broke up, without any resolution being come to respecting the express object of its meeting, the greater and nearer event having rendered cool deliberation for the present impossible. We hope in

our issue of to-morrow evening to communicate to our readers and the world the great news that at length "a king rules in Zion, and hath gathered the peoples under his wings," as saith one of our ancient poets.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT was perhaps fortunate that beside Bertie and the Prince, only one person in the whole assembly caught the remark which Criss had first uttered in reply to the proposition last made to him. That person was the President himself, who, fascinated as it were by the presence of his new-found son, suffered no look or word of Criss's to escape him. Criss's exclamation had been to the effect that he seemed to have lighted upon a congregation of Judases. It was at Bertie's entreaty that he abstained from repeating the remark so as to be heard by all.

As the assembly began to disperse, a messenger approached Criss, and said that the President earnestly desired his attendance in

an adjoining chamber. Criss paused but to hold a few moments' conversation with Bertie and the Prince, and then went to meet his father.

"Child of my Zöe!" exclaimed the latter advancing to embrace him, "the shock of joy on recognising you just now had well-nigh killed me. Even yet am I feeble through its effects. But you still look somewhat coldly on me. Do you doubt that I am your father?"

"I do not doubt it," said Criss, "though it was only during the last hour, and by means of certain relics which I obtained from the Lebanon, that I have been led to recognise you. This portrait was carefully treasured by her. It is evidently the portrait of yourself."

"Living image of her that you are, with just a trace of myself and my own Greek lineaments, behold here the companion picture to that, the picture of her, which has never left my breast, even as she has never vanished from my heart."

And he placed in Criss's hands an exquisite likeness of the unfortunate Zöe.

Earnestly and tearfully Criss gazed upon

his mother's picture, but he still failed to respond to his father's demonstrations of affection. The latter perceived his coldness, and sought to know the cause.

"You are reproaching me in your mind for the neglect of which you consider me to have been guilty in regard to you," he said ; "but believe me, I have sought and sought in vain to ascertain what had become of my lost wife and her father. All that I could ascertain was, that shortly after their ascent from Damascus, a tremendous hurricane occurred, and they were never seen again. You were not born then, you know, though your birth was expected. As it was, you must have made your appearance too soon. Our marriage was a concealed one. Zœe continued to live with her father, who was truly a man to be dreaded, by me as well as by her ; and we were tortured with anxiety to keep her condition a secret from him. Believe me, I do not deserve your reproach on the score of neglect."

"My father," replied Criss with emotion, "you have failed utterly to divine the nature of the feeling which divides us. I have to

thank you, and I do thank and bless you, for having infused into me that admixture of Greek blood which has saved me from having a sordid nature, and enabled me to recognise the supremacy of beauty and goodness over rank and wealth. But how is it that you, who are all Greek, could so far abandon the traditions of your race as to propose to your newly discovered son a course incompatible with honour ?”

“ For one side of your mental composition you may possibly be indebted to me,” returned his father. “ I mean the *Æsthetic*. But there you must stop. The Greeks, no more than the Jews, are to be credited with the other qualities you ascribe to them. If Jacob be their type, Ulysses is ours. Morality was never our forte ; but on the contrary, with all our addiction to philosophy and art, we have ever been an insincere and venal people. No, for what you possess of moral sentiment, you must thank your mother, not me ; or rather her mother, for there you obtained your Teutonic characteristics.”

“ I have Teuton blood in me ! I am indeed glad. The blood of the race to which

Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Tennyson, and Goëthe belonged ! as well as of the race of Homer, Æschylus, and Plato ! in addition to that of Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul ! What a privilege, but also what a responsibility ! I am so glad to be a Teuton ! I understand now the secret of my sympathetic yearnings towards the grandest of the world's races, in its combination of the intellectual with the moral ; the first race in which Conscience was elevated to its proper supremacy."

" Well," resumed his father, " you see you have judged our conduct by some code which finds no recognition here. Neither my proposition that you should appropriate the throne of Soudan ; nor that of the Chief of the Sanhedrim, that you should retain the Talisman of Solomon, to grace the restored crown of Israel, rather than follow a sentimental impulse, shocked the prejudices of any of our people. Following the divine law anciently given to them, the Jews, now as ever, refuse to recognise as right anything that tells against themselves. Whatever makes for them is good, whatever against them evil. This in Jerusalem is the sole standard of

morality. I, as a Greek, follow them in this ; only, also as a Greek, I prefer things to be pretty rather than ugly.

“ Besides, I consider myself entitled to hate those who robbed me of my Zöe. It was through the persecutions your grandfather suffered from the reigning branch in Soudan, that he fled, and she was lost to me. It was nothing to me that he deserved their enmity. Right or wrong, I suffered by it, and I resented it. But I have been avenged. For it is I who have been chief agent in grinding down their people by taxation, and so bringing about the revolution with all its dread results. It is I who have kept the Committee from acceding to all entreaties for a mitigation. If I wished you to supplant that branch, it was for personal vengeance. If I now wish you to become sovereign of this country, it is as much for the sake of seeing my son the instrument of their punishment, as for any other ambition.

“ And now that we perfectly understand each other, come to my palace and abide with me. Being my home, it is yours also. We shall have much to tell each other.

Together we will pen the acceptance of the offer conveyed to you by the Chief of the Sanhedrim, an acceptance which will make me father of a far greater sovereign than any Emperor of Central Africa can ever be. For as King of Israel, the wealth of the world will be at your command. At your bidding, mighty capitalists will loosen or tighten their purse-strings, and the nations that are afar off will follow peace or rush to war. Hail! Christmas, Sovereign of Judea! What a coronation will thine be! When, amid the glories of the noblest edifice of the modern world, noblest in its uses, noblest in its architecture, infinitely in every respect surpassing its famous predecessors on the same site—even the temple reared by him whose sacred Talisman will adorn thy brow.—Ah! I forgot. Oh, my son, relinquish this infatuation. Keep, keep the gems, and let them not go to the barbarians of Africa. Solomon himself refused nothing to his father David, not even his dying request, involving, as it did, at least according to your code—the Teuton code—crime and dishonour. Surely you, then, as sitting on the throne of David

and Solomon, will not have the presumption to affect to surpass them in virtue, and condemn the morality of that great Semitic race whose blood you share ! The cost is indeed a slight one to pay for such an heirloom."

"We place a different estimate on the cost of such a deed," replied Criss, speaking with less restraint in his manner than before, for he was beginning to regard his father as partially deranged, rather than wilfully dishonest. "But you forget that the objection I raised before the committee was not against being king of Soudan merely, but against being a king at all."

"My son, you will have to forget what you said on that point. The Jews have too long set their hearts on precisely such a solution of their political difficulties as the discovery of you presents. They will not consent to waive their nation's longings in deference to your fantasies. Being in Jerusalem, you are in their power, and should you persist in your refusal, they are quite capable of taking you by force and making you their king. Even flight will serve you little when they are determined, for Mammon is the god

of this world, and they are his priests. No nation can or dare harbour you from them. And I warn you that I for one shall not interfere with their action."

"Well," said Criss, in a light and cheerful tone, "we will not talk more about that just now. You can understand that at the heights from which I am accustomed to survey the world, its loftiest eminences are apt to seem very low. But I really must leave you now. My friends will be expecting me at the hotel. Farewell for to-night, my father. An eventful day, such as this has been, merits extra repose."

"What! will you not enter and sleep beneath my roof on this the first night of our meeting? It is true I have no family to whom to introduce you. I dwell in this palace," he said, pointing to a magnificent edifice before which they had now arrived, "solitary and sad. No new ties have been mine. It is as if I had waited expressly for you to come to me—you, who are the sole heir of my heart and my wealth. At least enter and eat with me, if you cannot all at once reconcile yourself to your new ties."

It was late when Criss returned to his hotel. Going straight to Bertie's room, he roused him from a light sleep, saying,

"Now, dear Bertie, we must be off. Is the Prince prepared, think you?"

"Perfectly, and impatient to start. He is congratulating himself on having a friend and relative in the King of the Jews."

"Ah," said Criss, "we shall have to devise some other means for reducing taxation in Soudan. Now, come softly, and say not a word. Unless I have been misinformed, it is necessary that our departure be made very much like an escape."

"Escape! But will you not accept the——?"

"Accept! Why, my dear Bertie, don't you know I am a Republican?"

"That may be a reason for refusing to have a King over one, but not for refusing to be a King oneself. Besides, in putting back this Prince, you are setting up a King."

"Oh, yes. I do not dictate to others. If they prefer a monarchy, they are welcome. Here is the Prince's door."

The three descended in silence to the aeromotive-house, and having deposited an ample payment with the custodian, were soon aloft and far away on their flight across the desert towards the capital of Soudan, the Prince travelling with Bertie in his capacious car, and Criss keeping near them in his own little Ariel.

Ere they lost sight of the lights of the sleeping city, Criss cast a look back upon it, and murmured,

“Oh, Jerusalem! mightiest upon earth in thy power for good, by means of the wealth at thy command; feeblest, in thy ignorance of that wealth’s high uses! To think that I could stoop to be king of a people who value money for its own sake, and whose chief men counsel treachery! Was it for this that thy prophet-poets of old heralded thy restoration! Not until thou hast exchanged thy father Jacob as thy type, for that nobler exemplar, even the Son whom, while rejected of thee, all other nations revere, wilt thou become in truth a People chosen and blessed.”

And when morning came, and the cool stars overhead melted away and vanished in

the hot desert blasts, and the travellers rose high in search of fresh airs and favouring currents, Criss again thought of what money might do to redeem the earth, could its possessors but consent to the sacrifice ; and how, under its present misuse, it was little better than a curse. And a longing came over him to bury all the wealth of himself and his race in the sands of the Sahara, in the hope that, peradventure, such descent into Hades of the god Mammon, might be followed by a resurrection and ascent to better things for the whole human race.

A few days later, and the universal press of the world contained an account of the successful expedition of the Federal aerial fleet to Soudan, and the restoration of the Empire. The rejoicings on the occasion were described as being of a somewhat novel character.

“ The young Emperor,” they stated, “ wishing to impress his subjects with a sense of the advantages of a higher civilisation than they have as yet attained, and anxious to lose no time in improving their condition (for it

appears that he has developed a hitherto unsuspected tendency to philanthropy), requested the admiral to signalise his accession by an exhibition of the destructive powers of the squadron.

"The admiral, deeming that the expense of such a demonstration would be amply compensated by its moral effects, consented, and was accordingly requested to destroy the poorest and most unhealthy quarter of the Bornouse capital. For this comprehensive measure, the Emperor obtained the consent of the inhabitants of the district in question, engaging on his part to rebuild and furnish the doomed quarter in a greatly improved fashion, and to provide for the population during the interval.

"The proffer was accepted, and an evening fixed for the pyrotechnic demonstration; the inhabitants of the doomed district being first comfortably accommodated in various barracks and other public buildings. The admiral then detached a couple of vessels for the service. These, cruising slowly round and round over the town within the assigned limits, at a moderate elevation, dropped at

short intervals during a period of two or three hours, shells containing explosives and combustibles, the native troops being employed to keep the fire from spreading beyond the doomed quarter.

“The inhabitants seem to have been so delighted with the spectacle, that there is some reason to fear that its beauty may have tended to counteract the wholesome impression intended to be produced, and that an attack on the white settlers will henceforth be considered a cheap price for such a display of fireworks. A subsequent examination showed that not only was every street and building, no matter what the strength of its construction, utterly destroyed, but the very foundations on which they stood were ploughed and dug up by the bursting of the shells after they had buried themselves in the earth.

“It is rumoured that the sudden collapse of the revolution, and restoration of the Empire, have been achieved under British influence, and accompanied by some very extraordinary circumstances. However this may be, we trust that the spirit shown by the

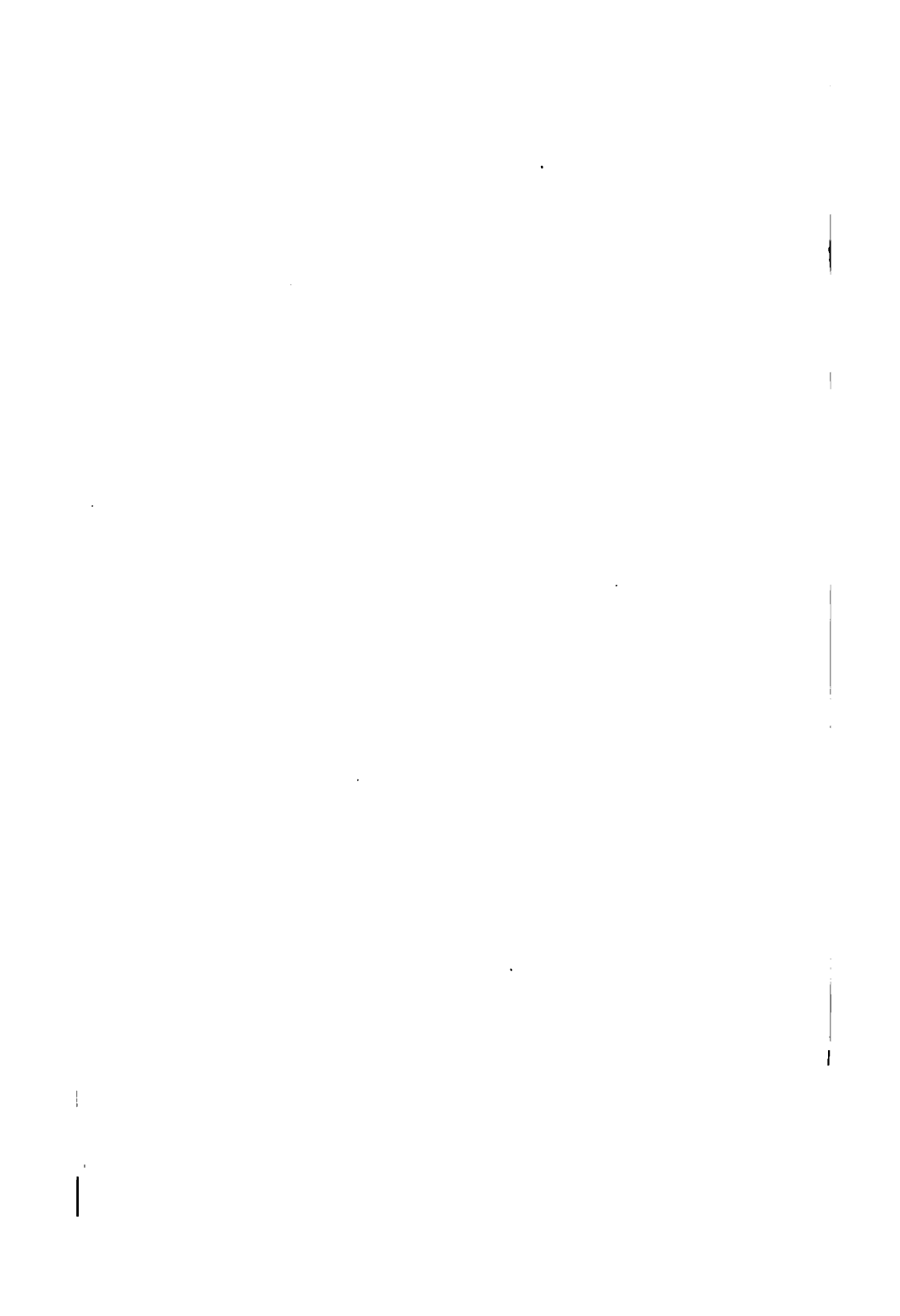
young ruler, and the good understanding subsisting between him and his people, will be productive of the happiest results to the country at large.

“The Federal fleet has since returned home.”

END OF PART I.

PART THE SECOND.

BOOK I.



CHAPTER I.



THE commencement of the reign of the new Emperor of Soudan was contemporaneous with three notable events in Europe. The first concerned France.

After oscillating for centuries between a rule founded upon the ignorance of its peasant masses, namely, the rule of a priesthood that fostered and throve upon that ignorance ; and a rule emanating from and sustained by the enlightened and naturally impatient denizens of its towns and cities,—France at length found at her head one who, while inheriting the most celebrated name in her historic roll, possessed also the Conscience, through the lack of which his ancestors had failed to secure stability for their dynasty and nation.

A Napoleon had now arisen, who had the courage to follow an English example, and adopt the only method that could free his country from the evil which had led to all its misfortunes. Seeing that a Henry VIII. was as necessary to complete the Emancipation of France as it had been to commence the Reformation of England, this prince determined to play such a part. It is owing to this determination, and the success with which it was carried into execution, that the Gallican Church is now independent of the Papacy, its priests deriving all their honours and emoluments directly from the head of the State, with liberty to marry, and be as other citizens in interest and heart. But this is not all. The race of the Napoleons has never been an altogether unselfish one. The example of England and his own perceptions convinced the French ruler that there could be no element of permanency in a State the bulk of whose citizens were too ignorant to comprehend the obligations of citizenship. It was not enough that Napoleon had set the church free from Rome ; he must also set the people free from the church. The second

feat was harder of execution than the first. It might suit the priests to hold their functions and benefices from a home instead of from a foreign authority ; but it assuredly would not suit them to lose their own authority over their people. They declared themselves content with the change already made, and which, following English precedents, they called the Reformation. But the government was firm in its resolve not to remain behind its great neighbour in respect of that which had been the chief agent of her greatness. France must follow England in having an Emancipation as well as a Reformation. The National Church must identify itself with the National School, and the teaching in both must aim at the free development of the understanding and the conscience. This, as we know, involved the substitution of evidence and utility for authority and tradition, as the basis of all education.

I need not dwell upon the despair of the French priests in presence of the necessity thus forced upon them of going to school again to unlearn all their old habits and ideas. The Government was firm with them, but it was

also tender. Time was allowed. The old ones were pensioned off. The younger adapted themselves to the new regime. And so it has come that France now at length sees her youngest generations growing up in the enjoyment of their rational faculties rationally developed, and her institutions endowed with a stability they have never before known. Under an educational regime which repudiates all dogmatic teaching in favour of that of experience, her ancient race of Communistic *Doctrinaires* have learnt to regard security of individual property as the first essential of civilisation. In short, France has, through the education of her people, passed out of what geologists would call the catastrophic era, into the era of gradual evolution, long ago entered upon by the Anglo-Teutonic races, and to be adopted finally, as we shall see, even by the dark-skinned Turanians of Central Africa.

But France was not the last of the Celtic race to tread the inevitable path of modern civilisation. Ireland remained. And it is to Ireland that the second notable event of this period relates. It was a co-ordinate of the

event just described as occurring in France. Kindred alike in race and religion with France, Ireland could not remain uninfluenced by the progress of that country. Ireland suffered France to do for her what she had persistently refused to accept from England. The essential basis of all modern civilisation consists, as cannot too often be repeated, in the early development of the popular intelligence. Ireland, preferring the priest to the schoolmaster, had kept her people in the same condition of ignorance as the peasantry of France. France emancipated, and her people educated, Ireland must not lag behind.

But Ireland had not, like France, a strong ruler to urge her onward. It had long been the policy of England to let Ireland do as she pleased, provided only she remained in close political alliance with her. Ireland might emancipate herself, and England would rejoice thereat, but could not help her. So invincible were the antagonisms of race and religion; so strong England's sense of justice and respect for the individuality of peoples.

It was in accordance with the inveterate

papalism of the Irish character, that even the "Protestant" church of that country was constituted. A once famous English statesman, having acquired power by the popular sympathies which distinguished one side of his mind, used it for the gratification of the ecclesiastical tendencies which had possession of his other side. Availing himself of a period of dissatisfaction with the then existing state of the Irish branch of the National Church, he declined to wait until the public mind should be fairly enlightened, and took advantage of a political crisis to detach that branch altogether from the nation, and erect it into a sect, endowing it at the same time with a large portion of the National Church property. Thus, deprived of the fund and organisation set apart by the providence of previous generations for promoting the highest welfare of its whole people, and handed over almost helpless to the two great religious parties which divided nearly the whole country between them, the progress of Ireland was for centuries put back. Her sole hope lay in the system of national education, which the British Government had already

set in operation ; a sorry reed to lean upon, when the two dominant parties of Catholic and Protestant Episcopalians, as they were uncouthly denominated, were equally opposed to the development of the popular mind apart from ecclesiastical traditions, and one of them could bring to bear against such development the wealth of the national establishment, with which it had been so unfairly endowed.

Spain, influenced by emancipated Italy, had long been free, and her people educated. France and Ireland alone of European peoples remained beneath the shadow of the Dark Age. The former having now emerged, the latter ventured timidly to set her foot on the path of human progress.

Her leading sons said—

“ Let us amalgamate the resources of all the religious sects whose principles and divisions have so long ministered to our hindrance. Let us set ourselves free from the trammels of tradition, by remodelling the churches upon the basis of the school, so that we too, like Italy, like Spain, like France, aye, and like England, may have one all-compre-

hending national organisation, devoted to the promotion of our highest welfare, intellectual, moral, and spiritual ; and constituting at once the national church and national school system of Ireland."

They could not say *like America* also. America never has possessed a national church which she could turn to account in developing the national mind. Her young, it is true, come, as a matter of course, under the beneficial influence of an education provided by the State on a broad basis ; but, leaving school early, as her children almost invariably do, they find no high standard of knowledge and thought to sustain them in after life ; so that America is still, so far as regards the general education and sentiment of her people, behind the European standard. Her own people, however, say that it is because they have so much *land* to look after, in comparison with other peoples. This may to some extent account for the defect. Too much of Earth is apt to be an impediment to the cultivation of the higher nature, which regards the heaven of the Ideal.

The third notable event of this time took place, not upon the arena of nations, but in a chamber in the Triangle. It was a consultation between Christmas Carol and Lord Avenil on the subject of the trigonometrical survey of Central Africa, which was being made by the Emperor of Soudan, at the instance of his cousin.

The two former events were in no way connected with our story. They are referred to only for the purpose of illustrating the condition of Europe as compared with that of its comparatively barbarous neighbour. Europe, freed from pressure of physical circumstance, could devote herself to matters of high moral import; while Africa, as the event last named shows, was still concerned with the material elements affecting her future welfare. In short, much in the same way that a tribe of savages now existing in one part of the world, represents the former condition of civilised races now existing in other parts, so Soudan represented for us very much the condition in which we were at a time not long previous to the Victorian era.

The survey in question was sufficiently

complete to demonstrate the feasibility of an idea which had occurred to Criss. As it was a practical idea, and one promising vast material results, it was adopted with alacrity by Avenil. To his own surprise and delight, Avenil found himself admiring a vast conception, and encouraging a vast project, that conception and that project having originated with his dreamy idealistic ward. As with all vast projects, it would, probably, for some time have remained a project, had not special circumstances occurred to hasten it into realisation.

A terrible plague broke out in Soudan, ravaging in particular the plains which extend from Lake Tchad to the mountains, and not sparing the white settlers on the hill sides. The plague was caused by an extraordinary overflow of the lake and its tributaries, which kept the surrounding country in the condition of a swamp for a much longer period than was usual. The overflow and the plague were the circumstances which hastened the execution of Criss's project. This project itself was nothing less than the

draining of the Plateau, by converting the river *Shary*, the main feeder of the lake, and the lake itself, into a regular well-ordered navigable water-system, which should discharge itself into the Sahara, and either by the deposit of its sediment there form a new delta, akin to that of Egypt, or flow, a continuous river, to the sea.

On the breaking out of the plague, Criss, ever on the watch for an opportunity of being useful, had gathered a powerful staff of doctors, and transported them by aerial transit, with all the appliances of their art, to the afflicted region. As the disease contained symptoms which were new, some little time elapsed before the precise nature of its essential poison was ascertained and the antidote found. When at length the doctors were able to work with good effect, myriads had fallen, and among them the whole family of the Hazeltines, Nannie's relations. Nannie herself escaped unharmed. Utterly forlorn, she accepted Criss's offer of a home with his friends in London, until at least her father could be communicated with. She was, accordingly, brought over, at Criss's instance,

by Bertie Greathead, and consigned to the care of the Miss Avenils, while Criss remained at his post of benevolence in Central Africa.

Actuated by Criss's influence and example, the young Emperor laboured assiduously to mitigate the sufferings of his people, and entered warmly into the scheme proposed for preventing a renewal of them. He did not conceal from Criss the passionate preference which he felt for the achievements of war over those of peace; neither did he abandon his desire of vengeance on his hated neighbours, the Egyptians. But of this last he said nothing; for he saw that at present the stability of his throne depended on his following his cousin's counsel, and Criss had given him to understand that he would be no party to a war of aggression. He had not yet been crowned, nor had the sacred Talisman of his race yet returned to his keeping. The quiet determination shown by Criss in respect of these jewels had served to rivet yet more firmly his influence over the Emperor.

On the approach of the anniversary of his accession, the Emperor was anxious for the

ceremonial which was to complete his dignity. It was with no slight reluctance and chagrin that he adopted Criss's counsel, and issued a proclamation deferring the event for another year. "A coronation," said this document, "should be a season of universal rejoicing. The Emperor, sharing in the afflictions of his people, cannot rejoice while they are suffering, neither can he call on them to rejoice while yet smarting under recent bereavements. Let Emperor and People continue to work together for the general good, and when the plague is happily stayed, and the memory of its sorrows faded, then shall all Soudan join in a grand festival of dignity and delight."

Criss's repeated injunction to his Imperial cousin was in this wise :—"Do your duty up to the highest point to which it is discernible. Do it because it is your duty, as well as that of every man, to do the best he finds in him, and without thinking of reward. Do your duty, and perchance a reward will come, even beyond that of having been able so to do."

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders, and said that he should be acting contrary to all the traditions, not of his own race merely,

but of all kings and emperors he had ever heard of. Nevertheless, to show his regard for his relative and friend, he would do his duty as thus indicated.

Criss had an idea which at present he kept carefully concealed in his own breast. He also had information which he with equal care strove to keep from reaching the Emperor. The idea was to utilise the River Niger in the regeneration of Africa, by borrowing at least a portion of its abounding waters, and turning them, at the northernmost point of their vast bend, into the thirsty Sahara, to swell the stream to be drawn from Lake Tchad. The information was concerning the disposition of the people of the great congeries of States, of which Timbuctoo is the chief, towards a political union with the Empire of Central Africa.

The fame of the young Emperor's conduct since his accession, especially in regard to the plague, had spread far and wide, and won for him a victory which not all the arms of his predecessors had been able to accomplish. To add to their dominions the teeming and wealthy provinces of the Niger, with its

ancient and famous capital, and extend their sway from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, had for generations been the chief ambition of the reigning house of Abyssinia. The force of virtue was now to accomplish a conquest denied to the force of arms. Timbuctoo, the Mecca of the myriad caravans of pilgrim merchants, who, starting from Morocco on their camel-ships, traversed the yellow desert to the wondrous region of gold and ivory, and arriving on the banks of the Niger, greeted it as a sacred stream; Timbuctoo, once a favourite abode of civilisation, religion, and learning, and still a stronghold of Islam, was about to stretch out its hands to the chief of a rival people and creed, and say, "Rule over us, and let us be thy people." Never in the history of the world had Conduct thus incontrovertibly demonstrated itself to be more than Creed, in its power to produce peace and goodwill among men.

The young Emperor, while surprised at the fame of his good deeds, had no idea of the practical shape that fame was about to take. Criss, whose Ariel was by this time

known throughout the whole of Soudan, from the Straits of Bab el Mandeb to the shores of Senegambia, and who was everywhere recognised as the Emperor's cousin and friend, had held many a secret conference with the leading men of the Niger district. The beneficence of the new regime had already won them, and Criss's foreshadowing of the mighty works in contemplation for the redemption of the Plateau from the physical evils which beset it, made them eager to see their country also in the enjoyment of like blessings. It was made plain to Criss that, did he will it, he might himself become their king. Even to the chiefs of Timbuctoo, he said no word to indicate his designs upon the Niger. That must be a matter of after deliberation, when the peoples should be united under the same sceptre. The very idea of being deprived of even a part of their river, would, in the absence of explanation and information sufficient to reconcile them to it, inevitably produce a reaction in their sentiments.

Criss contrived that the intelligence of the

union of the provinces of the Niger with the Empire of Soudan, should be made known in such a way as to produce the greatest effect upon the Emperor and the world in general. The long-wished-for ceremonial of the Coronation was signalised, not only by the restoration of the sacred gems to the imperial diadem, but by the presentation of the homage of the representatives of all the provinces of Central Africa, to the Emperor of their hearts and their choice.

Before finally giving in their adherence, the new provinces had made one stipulation—that their religion should be respected. The Emperor's reply, dictated by Criss, had, wonderful to say, given complete satisfaction, alike to the intelligent and to the fanatic. He had told them that he regarded it as his business as Emperor, to punish offences against man; it was for God to deal with offences against Himself, and this was a function which no man could usurp without being guilty of blasphemy.

Many nations sent their congratulations to the young Emperor. The arrival at Bornou of the various ambassadors and their suites,

in gorgeous aerial conveyances, from all parts of the world, filled the multitudes with admiration, and eagerness for liberty to navigate the air themselves. They were given to understand that when they were sufficiently educated and civilised to enter the Confederacy of the Nations, they also should be entrusted with the same high privilege of navigating the atmosphere—the kingdom of the heavens being open only to those who knew how to use the earth without abusing it.

The demeanour of the young Emperor towards the ambassadors was everything that Criss could wish, with one exception. His feelings towards Egypt did not allow him to pay the same respect to her representative as to the rest. Indeed, to speak precisely, the Emperor showed such scant courtesy to the Egyptian ambassador, as to convince Criss that his disposition still retained a considerable modicum of the ancient barbarism of his race. He did not, however, despair of ultimately eradicating it.

CHAPTER II.

ANNIE was now an orphan. The intelligence brought her no grief. She was penniless ; but she cared not for it. If the world had no place for a young, beautiful, vivacious woman, the sooner, thought Nannie, she quitted it the better. Her business was to love and to be loved, and a fig for the civilisations if they required more of her in order to live. Men, indeed ! What were men for, except to support women ? Better go back to her country—Scotland or Soudan—and take the charity of those who knew her family, than study and toil, and be dull and stupid, and hate everything, and be cared for by none—not even by——

And Nannie's tirade ended in a burst of

tears, much to the astonishment of Susanna Avenil, who shook her head and looked grave for a considerable period before venturing a word in mitigation of a frame of mind so utterly incomprehensible to her.

"Ah, my dear child," she at length observed. "Men now-a-days are apt to fall in love with women for the capacities of their minds and the dispositions of their hearts, and not for their faces merely, no matter how charming they may be. I doubt much whether even your sweet face will win a man really worth the having. Besides, your self-respect must prevent you from making yourself dependent upon such a chance. Women in our times are above trusting for the means of existence to the favour of anyone, least of all to that of a member of the rival sex."

Nannie's only answer was a pout of such exquisite, petulant loveliness, that Mistress Avenil could not help smiling, and saying,—

"Well, Nannie dear, men are foolish sometimes ; and if you look like that, there is no knowing what they may not be inclined to

do. But it is not as a woman, but as a dear and naughty child that you will be loved. I suspect I shall have to turn you over to masculine treatment and advice, ere you sober down into a practical being. Now my brother——”

“Oh no, no,” exclaimed Nannie; “he is much too formidable a personage to be troubled about me.”

“Well, you are fond of Mr. Greathead——”

“Yes, I am fond of Mr. Greathead. He likes me too.”

“Well, perhaps his advice will be more welcome than mine.”

“I didn’t know he was at home.”

“He is coming back very soon, on a commission from Mr. Carol, who I am sure will be glad to hear you have consulted with Mr. Greathead, and begun to learn something useful——”

“I don’t care to make Mr. Carol glad one bit,” said Nannie, firmly. “If he cares enough about me to be glad, why does he go away and stay so long without coming to see me?”

"Mr. Carol has much to do in the world. He is not one to neglect his duties, even for the pleasure your society might afford him. Besides, he no doubt thinks, if he thinks about you at all, that you are too much occupied with your studies to know whether he is absent or present."

"Is he—is Mr. Carol really a man?" asked Nannie. "He makes me think sometimes that he must be something like the angels he meets up in the sky. He is always thinking of duty, and doesn't care for people, I mean for anybody in particular."

"I really must tell him of your serious impeachment of his humanity," said Susanna; "perhaps it will lead him to turn over a new leaf, and enact some other character."

"Do," said Nannie, "I don't like anyone I like to be cold-blooded."

"I am glad you like him, for I am sure you ought, if only in gratitude."

"I wish you hadn't said that. One doesn't like people through gratitude. But I like him well enough not to mind owing him a kindness. I hope he won't think I like him for gratitude."

"But you do not like him well enough to do what you don't like yourself, to please him?"

"You mean about these stupid books and tasks. Anybody who likes me, ought to like me as I am, and not want to make me different. That is liking some one else, not me."

"My idea of liking a person," said Mistress Avenil, "is trying to please them by doing as they wish."

"And my idea," returned the indomitable Nannie, "is making them like me whether I try to please them or not."

It passed the ability of the whole Avenil family to understand Nannie. They could not deny her native quickness of comprehension, whenever she gave a moment's attention to any of their occupations, but she seemed utterly incapable of submitting to the discipline of training, so as to learn anything thoroughly. Yet, while indifferent to the whole range of artistic or scientific acquirements, in whatever related to womanly airs and graces she was a born adept. Her

marvellous perception of the harmonious in colour and elegant in form was unerring. Bessie Avenil declared that she defrauded society in not being a milliner. Her intuitions as to character were like sudden inspirations. The younger Avenil girls took to her as a geologist to a first discovered specimen of an extinct species; shewing her all kindness in their power by having her to stay with them in turn, and affording her every facility for acquiring knowledge and skill in the various vocations wherewith they themselves had been brought up to minister to their own wants and the requirements of the community.

But town life and town arts did not suit Nannie. She was of the wild, and loved only the open country. The difference between the pursuits of town and those of country was to her as the difference between death and life. It thus came that whenever Bertie was at his residence on the Surrey Downs, she made Ariel Cottage her home. He was as a father to her, and whenever she saw Criss it was in Bertie's presence.

Criss had a charming place of his own not far from his old friend, consisting of a mansion and garden, but Nannie had as yet scarcely seen the interior, and the owner was rarely in it for many days together.

Criss's life lay now between England and Central Africa, though his thoughts often turned toward Jerusalem. Once, and once only, was he on the point of revisiting the Jewish capital. His father had written to him saying that the offer of the throne was the result of the sudden access of enthusiasm, excited by the discovery of a scion of the ancient royal race of Israel in one so fitted by wealth and bearing, to grace it. There was little chance, he thought, of the offer being renewed; and it would be a crowning joy to his life to see his long-lost son at home in his father's house. His health, he said, was terribly broken, and in any case it could not be long before Criss came into his paternal inheritance.

On receipt of this, Criss made up his mind to start for Jerusalem. He first took the precaution, however, of consulting a confi-

dential agent there respecting the probability of his being molested by the Jews with a view to the execution of their scheme. The information he received was of so suspicious a character that it caused him to delay until he could be quite sure of his safety from any plot. Indeed it implicated in no doubtful manner his own father, and in a degree and manner not yet clear, the young Emperor of Soudan. It was while Criss was corresponding with his father, that the latter was carried off by a sudden return of his heart complaint.

Though much disappointed by his son's persistent refusal to come into his schemes, he left him his blessing and his millions. And it was long before anything more was heard to justify the suspicions which had been raised respecting any plot in which Jerusalem was concerned.

Criss seemed to have realised the fact of his relationship too slightly to be seriously affected. It was an acquaintance rather than a parent that he had lost, and that an acquaintance accidentally and inconveniently thrust upon him. Not only had no opportunity

been given for the tie of nature to develop into one of affection and esteem, but there seemed little probability that it ever would have done so. Of his mother Criss had ever thought with much yearning ; but so far from this being so with regard to his father, he had, by some instinct for which he could not account, come to look upon himself as in a measure exempt from the condition of generation by double procession ordinarily imposed upon mortals. It may be that his own mind was wont so vividly to personify Nature, especially in its creative aspect, as to make him, in the absence of other parents, feel himself to be derived directly from it.

It never occurred to Criss that his kindness to Nannie might entail upon him any responsibility in regard to her future. He took it for granted that under the sage tuition of his friends, and the sobering influences of English civilisation, the pretty wayward child would soon learn to follow an even course of life, engaged in the ordinary duties and pleasures of the young gentlewoman of the period, and in the event of marriage over-

taking her, accepting her fate with a quiet gladness. It was only by slow degrees that Criss's friends learnt to comprehend her character, and to discern the ruling, though to herself unconscious, motive of her demeanour.

Bertie Greathead, now well advanced in middle age, watched Nannie long and anxiously before the truth dawned upon him. Her preference for the freedom of a country life did not appear to him a sufficient reason why she should never be so happy as when enacting the part of mistress of his cottage. The dwelling itself was plain of aspect and devoid of luxury. His household and requirements were of the simplest. He himself made no pretence to be other than an honest, simple, tender-hearted man, of quiet and meditative habit. Yet Nannie would sulk and look cross whenever he left home, and she had to return to her friends in London; and beam with gladness when his return enabled her to visit the Cottage again. Next to Criss, he was clearly the only person she cared to be with. And even for Criss she seemed scarcely to care when she met him in

the society of the Triangle, while when on the Downs with him she was blithe and happy as a bird.

Bertie took occasion one evening in the Cottage to twit her with her unnatural preference for an ordinary dwelling-place and the society of a dull old man, to the brilliance and animation of the Triangle. Nannie replied that she knew where she was happiest, and saw nothing odd in her not caring to be among people who were so clever and learned and civilised, that they looked upon her as a sort of natural curiosity; and that when she had a friend, she liked to have him all to herself, instead of sharing his attention with other people. It was not in "society" that she first knew "Mr. Carol," as she was obliged to call him in this stupid formal life, and it was not in "society" that she cared to see him. She was much happier to be alone there, and have Criss,—yes, she would call him Criss,—all to herself, or at least with only Mr. Greathead besides.

Nannie's greatest delight was to be seen walking or driving with Criss. She was perfectly aware of the admiration she excited,

an admiration which had attracted many most eligible young men to her side, only to be repulsed with the coolest disdain. But by the side of Criss she fairly swelled with pride, and no smallest item of the sensation they produced was lost upon her. They certainly made a wondrously remarkable couple ; but it may be doubted whether Nannie knew how much was contributed to the effect by Criss's own appearance.

"I like dark men. I look best beside a dark man. It needs the contrast to set me off properly. He looks better, too, beside a fair woman."

That was her way of putting it. But truly Criss's luminous soul shining through his almost Oriental skin, imparted to him an aspect sufficiently notable when compared with ordinary folk, without Nannie's angelic radiance to heighten the contrast.

As time went on, and Bertie's advancing age made him withdraw himself more and more from active life, and together with Nannie, he passed more and more of his time at the Cottage, it became plain to him that her

moods were coming to be wholly dependent upon Criss. His presence made her an embodied joy ; his absence, a picture of dull despair. Whether consciously or unconsciously to herself, he had become the object of her life ;—he in whose own life probably the last possible object was a woman.

As the Avenils had failed, so did Bertie fail, to induce Nannie to occupy herself with any sort of work or study. They sought for indications of some native bias which might be turned to account, but could detect none, except a certain fondness for children which led her to delight in decorating with ornaments any she could get hold of ; that is, any that were pretty, for with her personal beauty was indispensable. Her kind critics were struck, too, with her preference for infants over older children, and a keener analysis made the discovery that the maternal instinct rivalled in her the instinct which made her desire to be attractive to the opposite sex. She loved babies as children love dolls, and boasted that no one else could handle them as well as she did. It was the difference between her genuine unsophisticated mode of expressing

her nature, and that of the women of the older civilisation, which prevented the mystery of Nannie's character from being sooner revealed. So hard is it for confirmed complexity to comprehend the simple elements even of its own constitution.

Bertie alone ventured to say a word to Criss respecting his protégée. She chanced to enter the room while they were speaking of her, and her strange preference for so quiet a life as that of the Cottage. Criss took the opportunity to enquire of her whether there was anything she needed to add to her comfort. Nannie said she supposed not. She didn't know of anything, at any rate of anything that he could provide. And then she turned very red, and with a sort of hysterical sob, hurried away from the room.

Distressed and perplexed, Criss turned to Bertie for an explanation. Had anything occurred to trouble her? he enquired.

"I cannot say, indeed," replied Bertie. "Young women have never made a branch of my studies. Ask herself, quietly when alone, for instance, while walking in the garden some

evening. Your return always elates, as much as your departure depresses her. My impression is that she thinks of nothing else from morning till night. Indeed, I don't see how she can, for she really has nothing else to occupy her thoughts. She is a very woman, so far as I understand woman's nature; and a woman of women in her nature."

"And I was looking upon her as but a child," said Criss.

"The young men of the neighbourhood and the Triangle show more discernment," replied Bertie; "but she has no eyes or thoughts but for one. My dear boy, if you wish her well, you must contrive some change for her."

Criss did not see Nannie again until he came suddenly upon her in the garden on that same evening. If she had intended to avoid him it was too late, so she made up her rapid mind to lead the conversation herself. She had never shown much interest in Soudan, or his accounts of his doings there. Of the magnitude of his operations, and the position his birth and fortune gave

him, she was ignorant. Now, she eagerly plied him with questions about the country which had so long been her home. What had become of the Hazeltine property? did her brother-in-law's relations live upon it, or had they sold it to strangers? would the people like to see her back among them? and could she not go and be useful in nursing the people with the plague, or do something else to pass the time? She supposed there must be some very nice folks there, as he seemed to like being there so much better than in England. And she wondered he did not stay there altogether, instead of taking the trouble to come home. And she wound up her incoherent array of questionings by suddenly taking off her hat, forgetting that it was too dark to see it, and asking him if he did not think it very pretty.

"And what have you and Bertie been quarrelling about?" asked Criss.

"Does he say we have quarrelled?"

"He has said nothing, save that I must ask yourself what has occurred to make you discontented."

"Did he say I am discontented?"

"No, you have yourself admitted as much."

"Oh."

"Is it not so?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know what?"

"That I am discontented, and have admitted it."

"Well, I won't tease you with questions. I will try and find out for myself, by watching you."

"You never stay long enough for that."

"I am going to stay longer than usual this time."

"Then you won't be able to find me out."

"Why?"

"Because when you are here I am never discontented."

"Very prettily said, Nannie. I shall reward you by showing you some of the pretty things in my house, to-morrow."

"Oh, I do so long to see your house, and everything in it. I have only had one little peep, and it seemed so nice, I could not think how you could stay so much away from it. I hope it will take a long time to see it all."

"Well, you must come over early, and bring Bertie to breakfast, and spend the day with me."

Nannie went to bed radiant with pleasure. Criss and Bertie sat up some time to talk over the great engineering operations already in progress at Lake Tchad. There had been considerable opposition to the scheme on the part of the Conservatives of Bornou, who said that if Providence had wished a river to run from the lake into the Sahara, it would have made one ; and also from the Economists, who said that whatever might be the result to posterity, the present generation would never obtain any return for the outlay. Criss's declaration that he would bear the responsibility, and pay the expense, silenced both parties. He had also purchased the consent of the tribes inhabiting the neighbouring oases, to flood their country. Already was an army of labourers at work, with vast engineering appliances, but the scheme had not been bruited in Europe. Neither had his ultimate design upon the Niger been divulged. This was to be contingent upon the experiment with Lake Tchad.

Bertie remarked that although he might succeed in restraining the overflow of the lake, and so vastly improving the condition of the plateau, he suspected that the desert could swallow up any amount of water that might be made to run into it.

Criss said that such might at first be the result, but Egypt was an example to the contrary. All depended upon whether the stream consisted of clear water, or was charged with sediment. The country about Lake Tchad was probably the largest alluvial plain in the world. He had made borings which showed the amount of soil to be practically inexhaustible. The water would soon spread a layer of this on the sand, and a new Egypt and new Nile would arise in the midst of the Sahara. Besides, if necessary, he was prepared to run his drain right up into the vast swamps which occupy the heart of Nigritia itself. The only doubt was as to the precise direction the stream would take : whether towards the Atlantic on the north-west coast, opposite the Canary Isles ; or north-east, towards the Mediterranean and the Libyan desert.

"Why, you will have done more than discover a world," exclaimed Bertie, as the vast scheme became unfolded before him. "You will have created one."

"My scheme involves far more even than I have yet told you," replied Criss. "A world without a sea, has no charms for me. The ocean which once filled the Sahara, alone can fill it again. But this belongs not to the present."

CHAPTER III.



SOUND of rippling laughter and singing in the garden, drew Criss early to his window next morning.

The impatient Nannie could not wait for the breakfast-hour, or for Bertie to accompany her. Criss's housekeeper, — a young married woman, who, with her husband and children, dwelt in the house, — was surprised by the apparition of Nannie, while the dew still lay thick on the lawn, saying she was come to stay all day, and demanding of her the baby, that she might nurse it until breakfast-time.

Nannie and the housekeeper were excellent friends, and the young mother had already proved Nannie's qualifications for such an office. A charming picture to Criss

did the two make in his garden : Nannie, with all the skill of an experienced nurse, tossing and fondling the child, and the child responding delightedly to her blandishments by throwing about its little limbs and crowing. Criss thought he had never seen Nannie look so lovely, or so womanly.

"Surely," thought he to himself, "that must be what she was made for. Poor child, what a pity it is there is no one here that she likes."

Nannie presided at Criss's breakfast-table, precisely as she had learned to do at Bertie's ; and Criss thought the period of his meal had never been so bright and cheerful before. After breakfast she disappeared for an hour, leaving the men to discuss the day's affairs, and was presently back in the garden with the child. Then returning, she told Criss that she came to remind him of his promise to show her the house and its contents ; whereupon he took her into a room which hitherto had been seen by her only in its closed and muffled state, but now was manifest in all its beauty of ornament and deco-

ration. This was the drawing-room, where Criss had arranged his paintings, and sculptures, and cabinets of curiosities. Opening one of these, he took out a necklace and locket, which had excited her admiration, and hung it round her fair neck. Nannie rushed in delight to the glass to admire herself thus decorated, and then returned it to Criss. But he told her that he hoped she would do him the favour to keep it for her own. Nannie said it was lovely, and suited her exactly, but she would rather not keep it; alleging as a reason, in answer to Criss's questionings, that she understood that only married or elderly women wore such jewels.

"But even if you cannot wear it at present," he said, "you can keep it until you have attained the necessary qualifications."

"No; I shall never marry," she answered, shortly.

"You never marry! My dear Nannie, what a fancy! Why, to see you with that child, anyone would think you were made for no other purpose."

"Appearances are very deceitful," said

Nannie, demurely. "I could only marry where I was properly loved ; and no one will love me like that. I am not a woman who could tolerate a man coming to me, and saying, ' Oh, I do love you with my whole heart so dearly, that I beg you will let me take you for a time on trial, to see what sort of a woman you will turn out.' That's what they do in Soudan. Mattie, my sister, was properly loved and properly married, for Frank took her for altogether at once. I am like her in that. I wouldn't be married in any other way. No rehearsals for me."

"You forget, Nannie, that the women as well as the men, have the benefit of the trial. Suppose you found yourself irrevocably tied to a man who was unworthy of you, or who did not 'properly' love you. One cannot always judge beforehand how people will agree in a new relationship."

"A woman who is a woman can always tell a man who is a man, when she sees him ; and if she is a woman she can make him love her as he ought."

"Well, Nannie, at any rate you need have no misgivings on the score of not being pro-

perly loved, when your time comes. No man can be indifferent to your sweet face and winning ways."

"I don't believe you mean a word of it," exclaimed Nannie, "for you are quite indifferent to them yourself." And she composed her pretty lips into a pout, while her eyes sparkled, and her whole frame vibrated with quick vitality.

"So far from being indifferent to your charms, Nannie dear," replied Criss, "I have found myself wondering sometimes whether, if you had not been possessed of them, I should have acted by you as I have done, from a sense of duty only."

"Oh, I hope not!" cried Nannie; "I could not bear to have you do things for me from a sense of duty, and not because you admire and—and—care for me."

Nannie's profound sense of superiority to all codes whatever of morals, and her habit of unconsciously referring all conduct to the criterion of affection, had often struck Criss as a remarkable element in her character. It coincided with his own intuitions in re-

spect to the infinite ; for he had found himself as much at a loss to discern the connection between the spiritual and moral, as between the physical and moral worlds. And here was the animal world, as represented by one of its highest types—a lovely, impulsive girl—repudiating it also.

“ Ah !” he said, “ what a world this would be if the promptings of love were always in accordance with those of duty. We might drop the word *duty* out of our dictionaries altogether then, and *I like* would rightly take the place of *I ought*. But we must have very well-regulated natures for that to be so, you know.”

“ I am sure,” returned Nannie, “ that if it was anybody’s ‘ duty ’ to like me properly, it would be his duty to do whatever I liked, too ! And I know he would be repaid by being very happy in return.”

“ I don’t doubt it in the least,” replied Criss ; “ and I think he will be a very fortunate fellow who shall win the whole of your affectionate little heart for himself.”

Nannie made a gesture of impatience, and turning to some article in the room, began

asking him questions about it. The morning passed rapidly, and in the afternoon several of Criss's friends came, much to Nannie's discomposure, for it put an end to her exclusive possession of him. While resenting the demands made by these upon his attention, she was struck by the greatness of the deference they showed him. Having no conception of the position held by him in the regards of men, and having, moreover, seen him only among his oldest and most familiar friends, she found herself now compelled to make some modification in her view of him. And as nothing gave Nannie greater annoyance than having to modify a view once taken, this and his engrossment by strangers combined to make the afternoon pass as disagreeably for her as the morning had passed pleasantly.

In the evening they were alone again, and Nannie's good temper returned; though she was still disconcerted at finding herself obliged to regard Criss as a personage of more importance than she had ever before deemed him. Nannie was very proud, and held herself to be as good as anyone. It was intoler-

able that any should deem themselves too good for her. And she shrank from the thought of Criss looking upon her as the occupant of a mere corner in his occasional regards, as might easily be the case if he were a great personage, engaged in important pursuits.

However, all reflections of this kind vanished in presence of the wonders revealed to her for the first time in the splendid microscope which Criss exhibited to her. For some time her faculty of surprise and admiration was so excited as to overpower all other faculties ; but at length her manner changed, her delight and vivacity disappeared, and she pushed the instrument away, saying she could not bear it—it made her feel so insignificant. It was no good being bigger, or cleverer, or prettier, than those tiny, ugly specimens, if when you magnified them you found them just as beautiful and perfect as yourself. And it was but a qualified submission that she made when Criss told her that he, on the contrary, derived more spiritual comfort from the microscope than almost from anything else ; inasmuch as by revealing the same

perfect organisation pervading the infinitely small that we find in the large, it demonstrates that nothing is too minute or unimportant to be the subject of the Divine law and providence.

Nannie expressed her approval of this thought, but said that, after looking through the microscope, it seemed to her as if there were no such differences as small and great.

Criss spent the next day in London, returning to Bertie's in the evening. Nannie passed most of the time he was there in the garden, saying she felt the house too close for her, and preferred the air. Again they talked about her, and Bertie said that Nannie had confessed that she had never been so happy and so miserable as yesterday. The strength of her feelings, he said, fairly frightened him, and he did not know to what they might bring her, unless she were provided with some object on which to bestow them.

"But why should she have been so happy, and why so miserable at my house?"

"Well, so far as I can make out, she was

happy because she was with the only friend she has in the world ; and miserable because that friend did not seem to be equally engrossed by her."

" But," said Criss, " that is very much like what is called ' being in love.' "

" Very much indeed," said Bertie, dryly.

" But you do not mean to say that Nannie is in that condition as regards me ? "

" I believe that if ever young woman was over head and ears in love with young man, she is that at this moment with you."

" Dear me," said Criss, " I never thought of such a thing."

" You don't seem over pleased at what any other man of your age would give his ears for," said Bertie, unconsciously repeating and recalling to Criss's memory almost the very words Nannie had used of herself in the *Ariel*.

" I suppose she is very beautiful," remarked Criss, as if he had never made up his mind on the subject.

" Not a man beholds her but declares that he never saw her equal, and that not for beauty of feature and form merely, but for the peculiar feminineness of her look and

ways. One cannot fancy her other than always young and blithesome."

"And as good as her looks?" said Criss, interrogatively.

"I believe," answered Bertie, "that her nature is a force which she will find hard to control. Way it will have, but its direction will depend upon the circumstances in which she will be placed, and the people with whom she will have to deal. Indeed, the responsibility of supervising her is already become more than I like to contemplate. Yet I cannot think of any change that would be for the better, excepting one. Only a husband can really influence her development and lot. Her whole nature throughout is genuine, rich, and untilled as a virgin soil; and like it, ready to bear a crop of good or evil, according to the will of the husbandman."

Here Bertie chuckled at his own unintended *double*.

"The strength of her character," he went on, "consists in her affections. She will abandon herself utterly to their dominion. Whatever she may do, whether in love or hate, will be done heartily. The man who

marries her will be tied to no inert mass. Her intense vitality will not let her be ignored, or got accustomed to as a mere habit. But she will be an active element in his existence, whether for his happiness or his misery. There is no sameness about her. Reading my Shakespeare the other evening, when I came to his description of Cleopatra, as infinite in variety, and lovely in all, I was irresistibly reminded of the dear child. And I truly believe she needs only a return as genuine as that which she renders, to ensure the happier fate."

"Well, Nannie, how is the head now?" said Criss, joining her in the garden. "I hope you liked my house well enough to give me the pleasure of seeing you in it again soon."

"I like the house and everything about it so well, that if it belonged to me, I should not always be leaving it, as you do, for other places. But was it really a pleasure to you to see me in it? I hope it was, because I like nothing so much as giving you pleasure."

"My dear Nannie, while flitting about on the lawn and among the flowers, you looked like a fair young angel. And when you were nursing and singing to the child, you appeared such a bright and joyous creature, that it seemed as if nothing but brightness and happiness could ever come where you were. I really could not help thinking that if only that young fellow who has been so fortunate as to touch your fancy, had seen you yesterday, he could not long have remained obdurate."

"What? whom do you mean?" cried Nannie.

"Am I not right in understanding your expression of a wish to return to Soudan, as an admission that there is some one there to whom you are attached? Well, now, coupling this with your liking for my house, I have been thinking that if the gentleman in question be really worthy of you, instead of your going back to Africa, I will send for him to England, and you shall have my house, or one just like it, for your own."

"But—but—" gasped Nannie, "I did not mean that I liked your house for itself. I

liked it for your being in it. There is no one in Africa I care for. Oh! Criss, Criss, why did you save a poor girl's life only to tease her? I did hope you cared for me a little bit. But now you offer to give me up, and get rid of me altogether! I wish I had jumped overboard from the Ariel, and made an end at once. I should have been spared all this after."

"My dear Nannie, I thought I was showing that I cared, not a little, but a big bit, for you when I proposed to do all I could to make you happy."

"Care for me when you would give me to another! No, no, that is not caring. Caring means wanting all for oneself. It means love, and jealousy too, for no love is without that."

"If ever a woman were to care for me, Nannie, the last thing I should expect from her would be jealousy. I should not give her cause. Surely you are not of a jealous disposition? For jealousy and happiness cannot possibly exist together; and I am sure you would prefer to give happiness."

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed; "but I can be very naughty, sometimes; I know I can,

and shall. But I know I can be very good and nice, too, at others, to make up. Why, do you know, I think it is partly because I am sure to be so naughty as to make him want sometimes to get rid of me, that I shall insist on my husband marrying me for altogether at once, when I do marry."

"I dislike the idea of limited liability marriages as much as you do," returned Criss; "but even other kinds are not absolutely irrevocable, you know. Good behaviour is always necessary, just as in other partnerships. But Nannie, it is not as a safeguard against a true and genuine nature that such release is permitted, but against falsehood and insincerity. And it is not in you to exhibit those."

"I like you to praise me," said Nannie, simply; "it helps me to be good."

"Tell me truly and seriously, Nannie. Do you think you would be perfectly contented and happy if you were to come and live altogether in my house, and take care of it as you do of Bertie's, and let me take care of you as my own dear little wife?"

Nannie uttered a sharp cry, and gasped out,—

"Do you mean it? Is it for real love of me, or only for pity?"

And without waiting for his answer, or rather, perhaps, reading it in his eyes, she fell in a swoon upon the floor of the arbour, in which they were sitting.

* * * * *

"I fear, Bertie, you must consent to lose the services of your fair housekeeper. Nannie declares that she likes my house better than yours, and has promised to come and keep it for me. I grant you that I have driven a hard bargain with her, for I have made her promise also to be my wife."

And the young pair stood before Bertie as before a father, to receive his congratulations and blessing, which were given in no niggardly fashion.

When Nannie, almost borne down with the weight of her happiness, had retired, he said to Criss,—

"Does she know all?"

"She knows nothing," he answered; "but takes me for myself."

CHAPTER IV.



AVENIL was overjoyed. With work and a wife, he held Criss's sanity assured. The female part of his family was less pleased. Though kind to them as any brother, Criss had never manifested such preference for any of the girls as could justify expectation of a closer connection. Nevertheless, but for the intrusion of Nannie, there was no knowing what might not have happened.

However, no Avenil could entertain a petty feeling. They were of the sort of people who, if they err, err through strength, and not through weakness. It was probably the impression they produced, of having natures so strong and complete in themselves, that led to the comparative indifference with

which they were regarded by the opposite sex. Ordinarily, women like to be wanted. But an Avenil man never gave a woman the impression that he had any need of her. And an Avenil woman was endowed with too robust a faculty of self-help, to suggest to men the idea of tenderness. They might and did contract alliances, which were productive of a considerable amount of solid, sensible happiness ; but the passion of love came not near them. Between such love as they felt or inspired, and passion, was precisely the same interval, in kind and degree, as between talent and genius.

The two points the feminine part of the family mainly discussed now, were,—

Was Criss really and properly in love, and after what fashion? and, was Nannie “good enough” for him?

Certainly, Nannie was as great a contrast to them as could possibly be. They, so complete in themselves as to make the suggestion seem absurd that there was room about them for any complementary addition. She, so palpably incomplete, so unable to stand alone, so essentially complementary in her

whole structure of character and form, and therefore in her unlikeness to men so suggestive of likeness and fitness—in a word, so distinctively feminine—that men could not help being drawn towards her by the sheer necessity of their nature. Of course, Criss had made no such critical analysis either of Nannie, or of the feeling which impelled them towards each other. But he came to understand it all from experience; and the insight thus given him into the true nature of the relations of the sexes, was to him a further revelation than any he had previously attained concerning the fundamental nature and significance of the Universe. He learnt, too, what he had before but dimly apprehended, the truth of the old saying, that “Woman is not lesser man, but diverse,” so that the more a woman is a woman, the less is she a man.

On one point the whole of the Avenils took the same view, and held it strongly. They thought that by marrying Nannie, in the first instance at least, by a contract of the first class, Criss was running a great and superfluous risk. To put it out of his power

to get rid of her at his own will, they urged, was to hazard too much on an unknown chance. Even with people trained to civilisation from infancy, and whose every thought and action were familiarly known, marriage was a lottery, owing to the impossibility of forecasting the influence it would have on the character of an individual. How much more so, then, in the case of one of whom nothing was known save that she was utterly undisciplined and selfwilled.

Criss, however, would listen to no suggestion of the kind. He would give himself wholly, or not at all. He could not conceive of the fair creature he had so often saved, and whose whole heart was so evidently his, as making herself liable to repudiation for bad behaviour. Neither did he think of her as one whose spirit could be subdued by any amount of liability. But, be she what she might, he had all faith in the power of the true and honest affection he should give her, to mould her into complete harmony with himself.

Intense as was the satisfaction which Criss derived from Nannie's unrestrained abandon-

ment to the impulses of her emotional nature, in the direction of affection, the unexpected difficulty he found soon after their marriage in making her comprehend that a man's nature possesses sides which do not come within the category of the emotions, at least of that of love, involved him at times in no slight embarrassment. She could not, or would not understand that he could have duties which must occasionally take him from her side, or friendships which bore no rivalry to his love for her.

With her nature, so far as it went, Criss felt that he coincided entirely. But his nature extended far beyond hers in every direction. And at this she rebelled, for she could not see why it should be so. No small nature ever can see how narrow it is, intense though it may be within its own limits. Her dissatisfaction found vent in the cry—

“All of me wants you, and only a part of you wants me!”

Criss was sanguine, however, that under his loving tuition she would *grow*.

As time went on, her expressions of regret at his occasional absences took the form of

strong opposition to all absence whatever. It was not enough for her that she always accompanied him when practicable. Neither was she content with burdening him with reproaches because he did not decline all business or other engagements which took him from her. She was jealous even of the engagements themselves.

"Why, Nannie darling," he said one day to her, in answer to her remonstrances, "what would become of you and your husband, supposing you had married a man who had to earn his living by working away from home?"

She evaded an answer by saying that Criss had no need to leave home to earn a living.

"But it is equally a duty," he pleaded, "for a man to fulfil his obligations in the world, whether he be rich or poor. The world would never get on otherwise."

"But I don't care for the world," she returned. "I only care for you. If you loved me properly, you would not care for anything beside me."

"Do you really mean that I do not love you properly?"

"You don't love me as I love you."

"You don't mean to say that you love me when you distress me, and try to humiliate me by persuading me to forfeit my self-respect?"

"How self-respect?"

"Why, by detaining me from duties I am in honour pledged to fulfil."

"Is it your duty to go where there are other women?"

"Sometimes."

"Well, that is what I cannot bear, that you should look at, or speak to, any other woman than myself."

"Do you know, Nannie, that the feeling you are describing is called by one of the ugliest names in language? We mentioned it once when talking together, before we were married, or engaged. Do you remember?"

"If you mean *jealousy*, I am jealous of you, and I am not ashamed to own it."

"You ought to have a better opinion of the power of your own charms. But do you really think you have reason to be jealous?"

"Reason! I hate the word. Never talk to the woman you love, of reason!"

"Nannie, I must have an answer. Do

you consider that I give you cause to be jealous of me?"

She was on the point of uttering an animated *yes*, but the unwonted sternness of his manner prompted her to change her *yes* to "No," and to accompany the negative with a pout, by which she intended to indicate that all she had said was in pure wilfulness, and that she wanted him to kiss her and be friends again. Her similar exhibitions on previous occasions had always terminated thus; but this time Criss thought it would minister to the happiness of both of them were he to postpone his coming round for a little while. So he said very gravely,—

"Nannie, love is impossible where there is no respect. To be jealous of me is to insult and outrage me. Never pretend to be so again, unless you can show me grounds for the accusation."

The pout faded from Nannie's lips, as with a frightened air she said,—

"You should not take so seriously what I said. I cannot conceal my feelings; and only wanted to show you how much I love you. I won't be naughty any more, I promise.

I do not mean anything by what I said."

And then with all the sweet and womanly arts which instinct had taught her to perfection, she insisted on his petting and making much of her, and recapitulating all her charms—a theme of which she never tired—and she meanwhile was so soft and clinging, and withal so childlike and simple in her affectionateness, that he perforce admitted that, however naughty she might sometimes be, surely no one ever better repaid petting than his Nannie—*for a short time!*—a qualification which brought out the pout that required so much kissing to reduce it.

In the hope of wearing out her craving for his exclusive companionship, Criss endeavoured to accustom her to social intercourse with his friends at the Triangle and elsewhere. In this way he hoped to turn to good account her love of admiration, a love of which she made no affectation of concealment from him; for she often entertained him with her narratives of the effect she produced upon the men by her beauty, and upon the women by her marvellous skill in dress.

Criss had a special reason for desiring to wean her in some degree from his own society. It was becoming necessary for him to revisit Soudan, and he dreaded the effect which the separation might produce upon her, unless she had the solace of some congenial companionship in his absence. There were many reasons why he should not take her with him. In the occasional short aerial excursions he had of late taken her, she had shown an excitability which, to use the words of their physician, "it was not desirable to encourage." And the climate of the plains in which Criss's business lay, was too trying for Europeans. Besides, while absent he would be always on the move.

He hoped to attach her sufficiently to some of his friends to make her willing to receive them as visitors, and exercise hospitality towards them in her home. But when he ran over the list, there was not a person in it against whom she did not raise an objection. And he soon learnt that to say a word in favour of any one else on any score whatever, was to find fault with her. The discovery that she was likely to become a mother filled

him with joy, as much for the hope it gave him that her condition of mind was the result of her condition of body, and would pass away with it, or that, at any rate, her promotion to the dignity of parent would bring with it the needed maturity of character; as for the pleasure with which he could contemplate the blending of his own and Nannie's lineaments in their offspring.

There was ample time for him to make his visit to Soudan before Nannie was likely to be taken ill, and he cast about for some method of gaining her assent which should not arouse her excitability and opposition. "Could she only once see herself as she makes herself appear to me," he thought, "she surely would be cured."

A remark of her own respecting some theatrical performance she had lately witnessed, suggested the Stage as a possible agent in her education. Without letting her know he had a hand in it, he obtained for one of the periodical performances in the theatre of the Triangle, the selection of a very clever comedy, the purpose of which was to exhibit the sorrows of a man under the infliction of a

jealous wife. It was one of the well-known series of educational dramas by which, through the consummate art of their construction, the highest moral teaching is conveyed without the audience being made aware that anything beyond mere amusement is designed.

To this Criss took Nannie, and so life-like and apt were some of the scenes, that he feared she would accuse him of a purpose in taking her, and perhaps of having a hand in the making of the play itself. But Nannie enjoyed it immensely, laughing heartily at all the points. And the only reflections she expressed afterwards were, as regarded the unhappy husband, that he was a fool to trouble himself about a woman who could behave in such a manner ; and as regarded the wife, that she did not deserve to have a husband at all, much less a good one who gave her no cause for jealousy. Of self-consciousness Nannie, to Criss's amazement and disappointment, exhibited not a particle : so utterly was she unaware that she had been gazing upon herself, as it were, in a mirror. And so completely was the lesson lost upon her, that she even remarked,—

" Oh, how I should hate myself if I thought I could be such a woman as that !"

Clearly self-knowledge and self-examination were neither forte nor foible of Nannie's; and it became a serious problem with Criss how to influence a nature so inaccessible to reproof. Perhaps by giving her credit for a virtue which she did not possess, he would be ministering to her acquisition of it. What if he sought to enlist her sympathies for some friend in difficulty or trouble ?

An opportunity presented itself. He told Nannie that Bessie Avenil, after being united for some time to a man morally her superior but physically and mentally her inferior, had resolved to dismiss him, on the ground that he did not come up to her idea of what a husband should be. And he appealed to Nannie, as a woman of feeling, whether it would not be a friendly act to try and save Bessie from the remorse she would be sure to feel for having deserted one whom she had taught to love her, simply because, though thoroughly good, he was a somewhat feeble specimen of a man.

"What does she say for herself?" asked Nannie.

"She says that when she married she was young and ignorant; but that now that she knows what a husband means, she intends to have a good one."

"There's sense in that," said Nannie.

"But not the tenderness or sympathy you would show for a husband who needed your consideration?"

"What does she say to that?"

"That sympathy is all very well, but that she prefers justice—justice to herself—and believes justice to oneself is the first of moral duties."

"And what do you want me to do?"

"It occurred to me that, before the final rupture takes place, you might get her here, and show her, by your own example, what an affectionate wife should be to a man."

"To a man who doesn't love her?"

"He does love her, utterly: only she is so full of life and health, that he cannot live at the same pace. You could teach her to hold herself in."

Nannie shook her head.

"He loves her so well," pursued Criss, "that he is ready, out of regard for her happiness, to sacrifice his own and relinquish her. You would have been touched by the tone of distress in which he told me how deeply he felt his own unworthiness, and inability properly to fulfil the position he held towards her. But he counted his happiness as nothing in comparison to hers."

"Have they any children?" asked Nannie.

"Only one ; a girl."

"And what becomes of it if they separate?"

"If they separate for incompatibility merely, it will spend half its time with each parent alternately. Where there is a serious defect of character or conduct on one side, the law assigns the sole charge of the child to the other."

"It is just as I said," she exclaimed, after a brief pause. "He does not love her, or he would not give her up for anything. He isn't a man, and she isn't a woman ; at least, not what I call a woman. If she was a woman, she would make him love her just as she wished, in spite of everything. I would, if it was me. I dare say she is not worth

troubling about. What makes you take such an interest in her? Isn't one woman enough for you to be concerned with?"

"Too much, Nannie, if she requires me to abandon or neglect the friends of a life."

"If you were properly in love you would have no room for friends."

"Were I to be indifferent to the welfare of those who have always befriended me, I should be a base wretch, and unworthy of love. You don't mean what your words imply, Nannie darling. I should be cruelly distressed if I thought you did. I should be forced to think you did not love me, or else that you were not worth loving, if I thought you did not care for my character, my honour, or my happiness."

"What do you want, then, with any woman besides me?"

"Have I not explained? Do you not understand the meaning of words?"

"I understand what you mean by *friends*, and I won't have it. I don't want any friends. Why should you?"

"Well, Nannie, I will say good morning to you for the present. I trust I shall find you

in a different mood on my return. It was a great mistake of mine to appeal to your consideration for another when you have none for me."

She was silent until he had reached and opened the door, and then she exclaimed—

"There's a man! pretends to love me, and goes away without a kiss!"

For the first time this appeal failed to arrest him. She darted after him, crying—

"Criss! Criss! how can you be so cruel to your poor Nannie, who loves you so?"

"Nannie," he said coldly, "I want to be loved in deeds as well as in words. If this passes your power, pray tell me so plainly."

Throwing her arms round him, and clinging to him with her whole lithe form, she exclaimed—

"Why, how can I better show that I love you than by being jealous of you?"

Making no response to her pressure, but speaking still in the same measured tone, he replied—

"Love and jealousy are two things wide asunder as the poles. Love means confidence, devotion, trust. Jealousy means self-

love, and its indulgence is the worst form of selfishness ; for it is a selfishness that takes the most pains to make others miserable."

" I am sure you are not miserable with me," she said, in one of her most winning ways. " No one ever said I was selfish before."

" Then do not force me to say it now. But endeavour, while I am gone, to think over the cause you have given me for pain, and resolve to be what I wish you in future."

" It's no use. I can't think of anything when you are away from me, besides you—and those women ! Oh ! I will be revenged on them !" she added, with a dangerous gleam in her eyes.

With a quick movement, and before she was aware of his intention, Criss had carried her back into the room, and deposited her on a sofa. Then, ringing the bell violently, he summoned a servant, and bade him hasten with all speed for the doctor. He then flung himself into a chair at a distance from her, and with knotted veins and heavy breathing, sat motionless, awaiting the doctor's arrival.

Nannie lay so still for several moments as

to surprise him. Her hand was over her face. Presently he caught sight of her eyes glancing at him between her fingers. Seeing he was watching her, she said—

“Why have you sent for the doctor? Are you ill?”

The evidently affected unconsciousness of her tone gave Criss a keener pang than he had yet felt. Could it be that she was utterly heartless? He would ascertain by letting her suppose by his silence that he was ill.

Failing to obtain an answer, she began to cry.

“She does not care whether I am ill or not. She is thinking only of herself,” was his inward commentary on this new phase. So he remained mute and took no notice of her tears. During this interval he changed his design. He had sent for the doctor, believing that Nannie’s conduct could only be attributable to some temporary excitement of brain, which required to be allayed by medicine. Seeing that she was deliberately acting a part, he resolved on another expedient.

Nannie, on her part, finding her tears un-

heeded, judged it time to try some other means of attracting his attention.

"Criss! Criss!" she almost screamed, "I am crying, and you don't come to comfort me!"

Still no response.

"Criss! Criss! what do you want with the doctor? If it is for me, I won't see him! I don't want him to know how cruelly you treat me;" and then, seeing him still unmoved, she added,—

"Or how naughty I have been."

The expression of pain on his face did not relax one jot, although Criss was beginning to suspect that her conduct was simply the result of a determination to make herself completely his master. He had commenced to give her a lesson for her good, and would not flinch from carrying it out, cost him what it might.

His prolonged silence was beginning really to alarm her when the doctor entered. Wondering what was coming, Nannie shrank into a corner of her sofa.

Criss rose, and having greeted the doctor with grave courtesy, said in a low and anxious

tone, as if in the room of one stricken with alarming illness,—

“ I wish, Dr. Markwell, to consult you respecting the effect likely to be produced on a child, by the mother’s giving way during the period antecedent to its birth to violent and unreasonable tempers. Is its health of mind or body in any way dependent on her conduct ? I wish you to speak without reserve, as I have the most serious motive for asking.”

Looking from one to the other, and divining the situation, the doctor said that the effect would depend in a great measure upon the period concerned ; and then in a low tone he put sundry questions to Criss. Having got his answer, he looked very grave, and said, aloud,—

“ It is the most sacred of a mother’s duties to repress, not merely all violence of demeanour, and everything that may excite her, during the period in question ; but also every thought and disposition which she does not wish to see shared by her offspring. A neglect of duty in regard to the former may result in the production of idiots or cripples. But even this is not the greatest misfortune

which can befall a family. The worst unhappiness comes from the depraved and ungoverned characters which are apt to be engendered by a neglect of the latter duty."

"Have you anything in the shape of a sedative that you can recommend to my wife? She has become liable of late to accessions of excitement, which cause me much anxiety both for her own health and that of her unborn child."

"Doctor!" cried Nannie from her hiding-place in the sofa cushions. "I won't take anything but poison. Send me some poison, and I shall be grateful to you. Oh, my father! my father! why did you give me such a wicked disposition!"

"You see, doctor, that she needs your care, and that more than is possible while you are under different roofs. Now I have a proposition to make to, or rather a favour to ask of you. I am obliged, much against my wish, to be absent from home for a space of probably three or four weeks. Will you either allow my wife to dwell with you, under the care of yourself and Mrs. Markwell, or will you transport yourself and your whole

family hither, and take care of Nannie during my absence?"

This speech brought Nannie into full possession of her faculties. It was the first time that Criss had spoken of his absence as an event near at hand. She sat up and gazed wildly at him with an expression full of agony and apprehension.

This demeanour was not lost upon Criss. Regarding it as one of the artifices by which she sought to establish her sway over him, and convinced of the absolute necessity, if they were ever to be happy together, of exhibiting the futility of her endeavour, he continued his address to the doctor.

"I am sanguine, doctor, of the good results which will flow from my temporary absence. The paroxysms which cause me so much anxiety and alarm, have steadily increased in frequency, duration, and intensity, until they threaten permanently to impair her constitution, physical as well as mental. So bad have they become, that even should my absence have no good effect, it at least can do no harm. I need not tell you how great will be my gratitude should the kind care and

professional skill of yourself and your wife be the means of restoring to my beloved wife the health, and to both of us the happiness, which this terrible malady has so wofully impaired." And Criss's voice faltered as he spoke.

The doctor began saying that he and his wife would gladly do all in their power to bring about so desirable a result, and he would leave it to her and Mrs. Carol to decide which of the two plans proposed would be most convenient and agreeable. But Nannie interrupted him, declaring that she would have nothing of the kind; that she hated medical women, who knew all a woman's little weaknesses by their own; and that if Criss chose to go away and leave her, she would follow him. She knew by her own experience, how ready he was to pick up women and carry them about in his Ariel; and she was not going to give him the chance of doing so while she was his wife.

Criss could not help feeling a certain sensation of amusement at the unexpected and ingenious perversity of this new attack. But he said to the doctor,—

"You see, doctor, for yourself what a task you will be undertaking. It is clear that it will never do for you to have her in your own house. These high walls are the only safe asylum. I intend, when you have transferred your family hither, to instruct my servants to take their orders from you alone. You will thus be able to control the movements of your patient."

"It shall be as you wish. May I ask when you propose to take your departure?"

"So soon as you are installed here. I have, out of consideration for my wife, already delayed it too long. The sooner I go, the sooner I shall return. I wish to spend the last month before her confinement with her. Of course, if you report her state to be such that my presence will be prejudicial, I will delay my return."

"You call yourselves men," exclaimed Nannie, "and you conspire to drive a poor woman mad."

"On the contrary," said Criss, "we conspire—do we not, doctor?—to keep a poor woman sane, who by yielding to wanton tempers is driving herself mad. We conspire,

too, on behalf of the unborn, as well as of the living."

The renewal of this suggestion made Nannie once more hide her face in the cushions, and sob. Presently a voice came from the depths, saying, in a subdued tone—

"Tell me when the doctor is gone. I want to speak to you."

Criss whispered a few sentences to the doctor, and dismissed him. He then seated himself beside Nannie on the sofa, and awaited her pleasure.

Presently she looked up, and finding herself alone with Criss, said—

"You don't know how to treat a woman. You will never conquer me in that way. Such a fuss to make about my loving you well enough to be jealous of you, and not like your leaving me! Why, I have done nothing, absolutely nothing. Mattie, my sister, was ten times worse than ever I have been. I have seen her strike him, and pull his hair out by handfuls. And Frank didn't make half the fuss you have made over a few words said by poor little me."

"Poor Frank, what a happy release the plague must have brought to him."

"Not a bit of it. He was very happy with Mattie."

"There is no accounting for tastes. He must have been very differently constituted from me."

"He understood women——"

"Women! yes. But not furies and maniacs."

"Women who are not logs, like the tame creatures who pass for women here. Poor Frank! he loved Mattie properly, and was very happy with her in consequence."

"I wish I knew his prescription."

"It was a very simple one."

"Tell me."

"It cut all her naughtiness short, and made her good for a long time together."

"What was it?"

"I—I—can't tell you."

"Do."

Nannie covered her face with her plump white arm, and bending her head a little downwards, looked with coy shyness at Criss through the angle of her elbow. Presently

the magic words came falteringly forth, and she said, speaking in the smallest of voices—

“He beat her!”

Criss turned away with the impatient air of one who has been tricked; but Nannie exclaimed—

“He did; I assure you he did. It is the only way with women like us. We must fear the man we love, to be good to him. If he had not beat her, she would have made him as unhappy as—as I have made you. And she was the happier for it too?”

“Am I to infer, then, that you wish me to follow his example?”

“I often think I should behave better if you were to beat me, and make me afraid to be naughty. Not with the fist or a stick, you know, but a little thin whip, or switch, which only hurts without doing any injury. Oh, I have often and often seen Frank trying to kiss away the red wales from Mattie’s lovely skin, while the tears were running down both their faces. Oh, they never were so happy as then.”

“I expect my wife to be a reasonable being, and influenced by other considerations

than those of bodily chastisement. Has affection no influence upon you? Are you not amenable to a fear of unhappiness, as well as of physical pain—my unhappiness as well as your own?”

“You speak to a woman as if she were a man, and open to reason! I tell you a woman who loves is not a reasonable being, and you must not deal with her as one.”

“A man who loves shrinks from making her he loves unhappy.”

“Then why do you make me so?”

“I do not make you so. You make yourself so by indulging baseless fancies.”

“Baseless! when you speak to other women?”

“Well, we will see what our medical friends can do for your disease. I give it up.”

“Oh, don’t let them come and live here. If you must go away, let me stay here by myself. I will try to be good—I will indeed. And you mustn’t be angry with your Nannie for loving you too well.”

END OF VOL. II.

1



